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HOW TO READ THE PROPHETS

HARVARD DEPOSITORY
BRITTLÉ BOOK

PART IV. EZEKIEL

BUCHANAN BLAKE B.D.



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HOW TO READ THE PROPHETS.



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HOW TO READ THE PROPHETS

BEING THE PROPHECIES
ARRANGED CHRONOLOGICALLY IN THEIR
HISTORICAL SETTING
WITH EXPLANATIONS AND GLOSSARY

BY THE
REV. BUCHANAN BLAKE, B.D.

PART IV.
EZEKIEL.

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THIS is the fourth volume of the series entitled "How to read the Prophets," and deals entirely with the prophet Ezekiel. The writings of this prophet need very little rearrangement so as to bring them into harmony with chronological requirements, and thus they differ from those writings which have been dealt with in the three previous volumes of this series. They are now in distinct chronological order, with the exception of a small piece in chapter xxix., and the cognate portions dealing with Egypt and Tyre, which we have associated here with their companion prophecies. There was thus not the same necessity for treating this prophet as we have done his great predecessors. But the plan of presenting all the prophets of the Old Testament in their historical setting, with the environment of time and circumstance in which they lived, that so their distinctive message to their own generation might stand out in bold relief, and their contribution to the development of Old Testament theology be the more easily perceived,—this plan has rendered it necessary to include Ezekiel in our series. The same method of treatment has been followed as in those which have been so kindly received by the public. The text without verse and chapter divisions, but with such divisions and headings as seem to be called for by the nature of the subject matter, is given. The translation which follows is based on the Authorised Version, but as the text of our prophet has come down to us in a singularly imperfect condition, many changes are necessary, which even the Revised Version did not recognise. The value of the LXX. here is very great ; while the peculiar style of Ezekiel in many places must be taken into account in

seeking to present him in an English dress. Many of the modes of expression, too, in the Hebrew are strong, and have received in the Authorised Version a coarser translation than is perhaps necessary ; for as standards of taste vary, so must modes of expression alter.

The life-work of Ezekiel was cast in very different circumstances from those of Jeremiah and the earlier prophets. The overthrow of the old Israel was now a fact ; Ezekiel stood face to face with a people in captivity—not simply with a House of Rebellion about to be punished, but now actually in the furnace of trial. He had to urge a due appreciation of the actual position ; hence he was a preacher who had to press home the sense of sin as the cause of present disaster. He saw the necessity for a new Israel thoroughly separated from the old idolatry. His denunciations of spiritual infidelity and his indictments of the people were necessary in the time and at the moment that he lived. The historical portions of the Old Testament have not much light to throw on the circumstances of our prophet. They tell us, indeed, of Captivity and Restoration, but the intervening fifty years, during part of which Ezekiel exercised his ministry, is a blank. Hence we have not inserted in this volume relative accounts from Kings or Chronicles, as especially in Isaiah, and to some extent in Jeremiah. The moral and religious activity and aim of the prophet are abundantly manifest. Only when all hope of continuance on the old lines was given up—only when all expectation of return to the old Temple was destroyed by the overthrow of city and Temple—only when thus new conditions appeared did our prophet address himself to the ideas of restoration and rebuilding. All old things had passed away. When this was recognised by the people, the prophet entered upon the clear statement of the new things. He was not a young man like Jeremiah when he began his ministry, for he was a married man before he had been carried into captivity ; but his prophetic career was not long, neither was it so

varied as that of several of his predecessors. His intense earnestness and sense of responsibility are everywhere seen. His frequent use of the formula, "Thus saith Jehovah," shows his deep realisation of his message as God-given, and his constant desire that the character of God should be understood and recognised as righteous, proves him to be a true prophet in the highest sense. Undoubtedly Ezekiel was a man of deepest sympathy, but his circumstances called upon him to view things from the standpoint of the understanding. Jeremiah lived in the rush of a daily changing scene; Ezekiel had to wait calmly, and had thus time for reflection. Jeremiah had to act; Ezekiel was called to no action. Jeremiah's work was in the present; Ezekiel's was for the future. Interest attaches to the ministry of Jeremiah because of his relation in particular to the Deuteronomic Law; a similar interest attaches to Ezekiel from his relation to the Levitical Law. As a priest, in close touch with the priests in the Captivity, his influence on the Priestly Code must have been immense, and there are many indications of this influence. Scholars have compared with diligence the words and style of our prophet with what is found in Leviticus, and the correspondences are many and interesting. Undoubtedly the study of the prophets in their chronological order helps immensely to a right appreciation of our Scriptures. For this reason, then, Ezekiel deserves the most careful attention, and the purpose of issuing this volume in its present form is to aid in some measure towards a better and clearer understanding of this prophet in the circumstances of his time.

Notes.—Portions in italics, or brackets, are not found in the LXX.

The names of persons, and places, or words printed in black type, are dealt with in the Glossary in the order in which they occur in the text.

DIVISION I.

THE TEXT OF EZEKIEL.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONSECRATION OF THE PROPHET, AND HIS VISION OF GOD.

Editorial.

In the fifth day of the fourth month, in the fifth year of king **Jehoiachin's** captivity, the Word of Jehovah came unto **Ezekiel** the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldæans, by the river **Chabor**, and the Hand of Jehovah was there upon him.

The circumstances (B.C. 592).

Now it came to pass in the **thirtieth** year in the fourth month on the fifth day of the month as I was among the Captives by the river Chabor, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. (Ch. i. 2, 3, 1.)

The vision or theophany.

And I looked and behold! a Whirlwind came out of the North, a great cloud, and a fire flashing from it, and a brightness was round about it, and out of the midst thereof an appearance as of glowing metal. Also, out of its midst came the likeness of four living creatures, and their appearance was as follows:—They had the likeness

of a man, and every one had four faces, and four wings. Their feet were straight, and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled like the appearance of burnished brass. And the hands of a man were under their wings on their four sides; and they four had faces and wings. Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. As for the likeness of their faces: they had the face of a man: they four had the face of a lion on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side: and they four had the face of an eagle. Thus their faces were. And their wings were separated above: two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies. They went every one straight before them. Whither the Spirit had to go, they went; they turned not when they went. And in the midst of the living creatures their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches; it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire lightning went forth.* Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth beside the living creatures at his four faces. The appearance of the wheels was like unto a topaz; and they four had one likeness, and their form was as it were a wheel within a wheel. When they went, they went toward their four sides: they turned not, when they went. As for their rings, they were high, and dreadful; and they four had rings full of eyes round about them. Now when the living creatures went, the wheels went with them; and when the living creatures were lifted up, the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the Spirit had to go, thither they went.

* V. 14 omitted in LXX. A Gloss.

And the wheels were lifted up over against them, for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. And there was the appearance of a firmament over the heads of living creatures, like in appearance to crystal, stretched forth over above their heads. Under the canopy their wings were straight, the one toward the other; every one had two which covered one side, and every one had two which covered the other side of their bodies. And when they moved, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters; * when they stood they let down their wings. Yea, there was a noise from the firmament that was over their heads. And above the firmament that was over their heads there was the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon what seemed a throne there was the likeness of a man above. And I saw what was like the appearance of glowing metal, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downwards, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and a brightness round about him. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the Glory of Jehovah.

(Ch. i. 4-28.)

The Prophetic attitude and Commission.

And when I saw, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of One that spake; and He said unto me:—

“Child of man! Stand upon thy feet, and I will speak to thee.”

And when He spake unto me, spirit entered into me, and set me on my feet, that I heard Him speaking unto me. And He said unto me:—

* See Notes, p. 228.

“Child of man ! I send thee to the Children of Israel, to rebellious **nations**, that have rebelled against Me ; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me unto this very day ; and the Children are impudent, and stiff-necked, unto whom I send thee ; and thou shalt say unto them : ‘Thus saith **Jehovah**.’ And whether they shall hear or refuse (for they are a rebellious house), they shall yet know thou art a prophet in their midst. And thou, Child of man ! be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, for briers and thorns are about thee, and thou dwellest among scorpions. Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their faces, for they are a rebellious house. But thou shalt speak My Words unto them, whether they will hear or not : for they are most rebellious.”

(Ch. ii. 1-7.)

Symbolic guidance.

And thou Child of man ! hear what I say unto thee : “Be not rebellious like that rebellious house ; open thy mouth, and eat what I give unto thee.”

And when I looked, behold ! a Hand was sent unto me, and lo ! it had a roll of a book, and it spread it before me. Now it was written within and without ; and there were written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe. Moreover it was said unto me : “Child of man ! eat what thou findest : eat this roll, and go and speak unto the House of **Israel**.” So I opened my mouth, and I was made to eat that roll. For He said unto me : “Child of man ! Cause thyself to eat this roll that I give thee, and fill thyself with it.” Then did I eat it, and it was in taste as honey for sweetness.

(Ch. ii. 8—iii. 3.)

The application of the Symbol.

And He said unto me : "Child of man ! Get thee unto the House of Israel, and speak with My Words unto them ; for thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech, and of an hard language, but to the House of Israel : not to many peoples of a strange speech, and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand, but I send thee to them, for they can understand thee. Yet the House of Israel will not listen to thee, for they will not listen unto Me ; for the whole House of Israel is impudent and hard-hearted. Behold ! I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads, as an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead ; fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house." (Ch. iii. 4-9.)

Divine repetition.

Moreover, He said unto me, "Child of man ! all My Words that I speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears ; and go, get thee unto them of the Captivity, the Children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them whether they hear or whether they will refuse : ' Thus saith Jehovah.' " (Ch. iii. 10, 11.)

The prophet's setting out.

Then the Spirit took me up, and I heard behind me the sound of a great rushing as the **Glory** of Jehovah rose from His place ; and there was the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and the noise of a great rushing. So the Spirit lifted me up and carried me away,

and I went in great anger ; for the Hand of Jehovah was strong upon me. Then I came to those of the Captivity at **Tel-Abib**, where they dwelt, and I sat down in silence among them for seven days. (Ch. iii. 12-15.)

The prophet appointed a Watchman.

Now it came to pass at the end of seven days that the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying :—

Child of man ! I have appointed thee a watchman unto the House of Israel, therefore hear the Word at My mouth, and give them warning from Me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die ! and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked man from his wicked way to save his life, the same wicked man shall die because of his iniquity, but I will hold thee responsible for him. But if thou warn the wicked man, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his evil way, he shall die because of his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thyself. Again, when a righteous man turneth from his righteousness, and commits sin, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die, because thou hast not given him warning ; he shall die because of his sin, and the righteousness of his past life shall not be remembered ; but I will hold thee responsible for him. Nevertheless, if thou warn the righteous man that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live because he is warned ; thou hast also delivered thy soul.

(Ch. iii. 16-21.)

CHAPTER II.

EZEKIEL'S FIRST MINISTRY BY SYMBOLIC ACTION
AND SOLEMN WORD.**A Second Theophany. Silence enjoined.**

And the Hand of Jehovah was there upon me, and He said unto me : Arise, go forth into the **Valley**, and I will talk with thee there. Then I arose and went to the Valley, and, behold ! the Glory of the Lord stood there as the Glory which I saw by the river Chabor, and I fell on my face. Then the Spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, "Go shut up thyself in thine house. And, Child of man ! behold I put bands upon thee, and restrain thee with them, and thou shalt not go out among them ; and I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be a reprover among them, for they are a rebellious house ; but when I speak unto thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, "Thus saith Jehovah. He that heareth, let him hear : and he that refuseth let him refuse ; for they are a rebellious house."

(Ch. iii. 22-27.)

Symbolic illustrations of coming disaster. (1) The siege.

And Child of man ! take thee a brick, and lay it before thee, and draw a city upon it, *i.e.*, Jerusalem ; and lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast up a rampart against it ; set also armed forces against it, and place battering rams against it on every side. Take also unto thee an iron plate, and set it for a wall of iron

between thee and the city, and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shall lay siege to it.

This shall be a sign to the House of Israel.

(Ch. iv. 1-3.)

(2) The necessity of punishment, and its period set forth.

Lie thou, also, upon thy left side, and lay the **guilt** of the House of Israel upon it. According to the duration of the time thou shalt lie on thy side, and bear their guilt. For I have laid on thee their guilt according to the duration of the time **one hundred and ninety days**: thus shalt thou bear the guilt of the House of Israel. And when thou hast finished them, lie again on thy right side, and bear the guilt of the House of Judah **forty days**; I have appointed thee each day for a year. And thou shalt set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem with thine arm uncovered, and thou shalt prophesy against her. And behold! I lay bands on thee, and thou shalt not turn thee from side to side till thou hast ended the days of representing the siege.

(Ch. iv. 4-8.)

(3) Symbolic of a protracted siege.

Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and vetches, and put them in a vessel, and make thy bread thereof as long as thou shalt lie upon thy side; one hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat of this. And thou shalt eat thy food by weight, about eight ounces a day; at regular periods shalt thou eat it. Thou shalt also drink water by measure, about a quart; regularly shalt thou drink. And thou shalt eat barley-cakes; and thou shalt bake them in their sight on **fuel** made of human dung. For Jehovah hath said: "Even thus shall the Children of Israel eat bread that is unclean among the

nations, whither I will drive them. Then said I, "Ah Jehovah! Behold! I have not been ceremonially defiled; for from my youth up even until now I have not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; carrion flesh has never come into my mouth." Then He said unto me: "Lo! I have given thee cow's dung instead of man's, and thou shalt prepare thy bread thereon." Moreover, He said unto me: "Child of man! Behold, I will break the staff of life, even bread, in Jerusalem; and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; yea, they shall drink water by measure, and in fear. I will do this that they may want bread and water, and be every one in alarm, and perish on account of their iniquity." (Ch. iv. 9-17).

(4) Illustration of mourning.

Also, Child of man! Take thee a sharp sword, use it as a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon thine head, and upon thy beard; then take balances, and divide the hair. Thou shalt burn a third part of it in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are ended; and thou shalt take a third part, and smite it with the sword; and a third part thou shalt scatter to the wind (for I will draw out a sword after them). Thou shalt also take a few of them, and bind them in thy skirts; then thou shalt take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire and burn them in the fire: from them a fire cometh forth.

(Ch. v. 1-4.)

The reason of Jerusalem's overthrow.

And thou shalt say unto all the House of Israel,

Thus saith Jehovah: Is this Jerusalem, which I have set in the midst of the nations and lands round about her? Yet she hath rebelled against My judgments, and

My statutes to do more wickedness than the countries round about ; (for they have refused My judgments, and My statutes ; they have not walked in them). Therefore, thus saith Jehovah : Because ye have rebelled against Me more than the nations round about you, and have not walked in My statutes, neither have kept My judgments, and have not even walked according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you, therefore, thus saith Jehovah, Behold I even I am against thee, and will execute sentence in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations ; and I will do in thee that which I have not done, and the like of which I will not do any more, because of all thine abominations ; and the fathers shall eat their sons in thy midst, and the sons shall eat their fathers ; and I will execute sentence upon thee, and the whole of thy remnant I will scatter unto the four winds. (Ch. v. 5-10.)

The Completeness of the Divine Judgment.

Wherefore, as I live, saith Jehovah : “ Surely because thou hast profaned My Holy Place with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore I am against thee : neither shall Mine eye spare, nor will I have any pity. A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee ; and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee ; and I will scatter a third part unto all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them. Thus shall Mine anger be accomplished, and I will empty out My fury upon them, and I will be satisfied ; and they shall know that I Jehovah have done it in My anger, when I have accomplished My fury among them. Moreover, I will make thee waste, and a reproach among the nations that are round about thee, in

the sight of all that pass by. So shalt thou be a reproach and a taunt, a warning and an astonishment unto the nations that are round about thee, when I shall execute sentence on thee, in anger and in fury, and in fierce rebukes. I, Jehovah, have spoken it.

When I shall send upon you the evil arrows of famine, which are destructive, which I will send to destroy you, (for I will increase the famine upon you) and I will break your staff of bread. Thus will I send upon you famine and wild beasts and they shall afflict you; yea, pestilence, and death shall pass through you; for I will bring the sword upon you. I, Jehovah, have spoken it.

(Ch. v. 11-17.)

The overthrow of false worship.

The Word of Jehovah also came unto me, saying:

Child of man! Set thy face toward the mountains of Israel and prophesy against them and say:—

Ye mountains of Israel! Hear the Word of Jehovah!

Thus saith Jehovah to the mountains, and to the hills,

To the rivers and to the valleys!

Behold! I myself am bringing a sword upon you!

Yea, I am destroying your High Places!

Your altars shall be deserted! Your sun images broken!

Your slain I will cast down before your idol-blocks!

In all your dwelling-places the cities shall be laid waste;

And the High Places shall be desolate!

That your altars be laid waste! Your idol-blocks broken up!

Your sun images broken — the work of your hands
destroyed,

And your slain shall fall in the midst of you,

Then ye shall know that I Jehovah have spoken it.

Yet ye shall have some that escape the sword among the nations.

When ye shall be scattered through the countries
Those of you that escape shall remember Me,
Among the nations whither they shall be carried captive,
When I have broken their whorish heart, which departed
from Me,

And their eyes, which went a-whoring after their idols.

Then they shall loathe themselves for the evil

That they have done in all their abominations.

Yea, they shall know that I Jehovah have spoken

Not in vain that I would bring this trouble upon them.

(Ch. vi. 1-10.)

A Renewal of the Divine Threat.

Thus saith Jehovah : Smite with thine hand, and stamp
with thy foot and say :

Ah ! for all the abominations of the House of Israel !

They shall fall by the sword, the famine, and the pestilence !

He that is far away shall die of the pestilence :

He that is near shall fall by the sword :

He that is besieged shall die by the famine.

Thus will I accomplish My fury upon them ; then they
shall know that I am Jehovah, when their slain men shall
lie among their idol-blocks round about their altars, upon
every high hill, on all the tops of the mountains, and under
every green tree, and every spreading terebinth, every place
where they offered sweet incense unto their idols. Thus
will I stretch out My Hand upon them, and make the land
desolate, yea very desolate, from the **Wilderness** even to
Riblah, in all their habitations ; and they shall know that I
am Jehovah.

(Ch. vii. 11-14.)

A Mournful Dirge over the Land.

The word of Jehovah also came unto me, saying :

Thou Child of man ! Thus saith Jehovah unto the land of Israel :—

An end ! The end is come upon the four corners of the land !

Now the end is upon thee ! I pour out Mine anger upon thee !

I will punish thee according to thy ways,

I will bring upon thee all thine abominations.

Mine Eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity ;

But I will bring thy ways upon thee,

And thine abominations shall be in thy midst.

Yea, ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

(Ch. vii. 1-4.

Thus saith Jehovah :

A trouble, yea a final trouble ! Behold ! It is come !

An end is come ! 'Tis come—the end !

It waketh for thee : behold ! It is come !

The fateful moment's here, O inhabitant of the land !

The time has come ! 'Tis near—the day of trouble !

There is no rejoicing on the mountains !

Now at once I pour out on thee My wrath !

Yea, I accomplish Mine anger upon thee !

I will punish thee according to thy ways ;

And bring on thee all thy abominations.

Mine Eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity !

For I bring thy ways upon thee, even the abominations in thy midst.

And thou shalt know that I Jehovah am smiting thee.

(Ch. vii. 5-9.)

Thus saith Jehovah :

Behold ! The day ! Behold ! It is come !
The fateful moment's here ! The rod has blossomed,
Pride has budded ! Violence has arisen !
As a rod of evil ! There's none of them !
The crowd is gone, and all their glory !
The hour has come ! The day is at hand !
The buyer shall not rejoice, nor the seller mourn !
For My wrath is upon the whole of them,
The seller shall not **recover** that which he hath sold
Even though he be still among the living,
For My wrath is upon the whole of them.
Not one of them shall retain his life by his iniquity.
The trumpet is blown ! Attention is called !
Yet no one goeth forth to the battle,
For My wrath is upon the whole of them.
Without—the sword ! Within—pestilence and famine !
He that is in the field shall fall by the sword !
He that is in the city—famine and pestilence devoureth !
Those that really escape shall be on the hills
Like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning in his sin.
All hands shall be feeble ! All knees shall flow with water !
They shall also gird themselves with sackcloth,
And trembling shall cover them,
On every face there shall be shame ; baldness on every head.
Their silver, they shall cast it down in the streets :
Their gold, it shall be as an unclean thing !
Their silver and their gold cannot deliver them
In the day of the wrath of Jehovah.
They shall not satisfy themselves, neither fill themselves,
For it has been the stumbling-block of their sin.
And their beautiful ornaments, they became proud of !

They made therewith images of their abominations, and detestable things ;

Therefore have I made it to be an unclean thing.

Yea, I will make it the booty of strangers ;

To the wicked of the earth for a spoil ; they shall pollute it.

Yea, I will turn My face from them ; they shall profane My shrine.

Robbers shall enter it ; they shall profane, and pollute it.

For the land is full of great crime : the city is full of violence.

I will bring wicked nations, and they shall seize their houses.

I will end the pomp of the strong ; their holy places shall be defiled.

Trouble cometh ! Yea, they shall seek peace—in vain !

Sorrow after sorrow shall come ! Tidings after tidings !

They shall seek a vision from the prophet ;

The teaching shall perish from the priest : counsel from the elders !

The King shall mourn ! The Prince shall be clothed in mourning !

The hands of the people of the land shall be troubled !

After their ways will I do to them ; as they deserve will I punish them.

And they shall know that I am Jehovah.

(Ch. vii. 15-27.)

CHAPTER III.

THE STATE OF JERUSALEM. PROPHECY OF THE SECOND YEAR (591 B.C.).

Explanatory Note.

Now it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house,

and the Elders of Judah sat before me that the Hand of Jehovah fell there upon me.

A Vision of the State of Jerusalem. The Image.

/ Then I looked, and lo ! a likeness as the appearance of a man. From the appearance of his loins even downward, fire ; and from his loins even upward as the appearance of brightness, as the appearance of glowing metal. And He put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of my hair, and the Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heavens, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the gate of the inner court that looketh toward the north, where was placed the Image of Jealousy causing jealousy. And behold ! the Glory of the God of Israel was there, as in the vision that I saw in the Valley. Then said He unto me : "Child of man ! lift up thine eyes now toward the north." So I looked toward the north, and behold ! northward at the gate of the altar this "Image of Jealousy." He said furthermore unto me, "Child of man ! seest thou what they are doing ? Even the great abominations that the House of Israel commit here, so that I have to withdraw from My Holy place."

(Ch. viii. 1-6.)

Idolatrous Practices in detail.

"But turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations." He then brought me to the door of the court, and when I looked, behold ! a hole in the wall. Then said He unto me : "Child of man ! dig now in the wall," and when I had digged, behold ! a door : and He said unto me, "Go in and behold the wicked abominations that they do here." So I went in, and saw : and behold ! all the idol-blocks of the House of Israel **pourtrayed** upon

the wall round about. And there stood before them seventy men of the Elders of the House of Israel, and in their midst Jaazaniah, the son of **Shaphan**, with every man his censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up. Then said He unto me: "Child of man! hast thou seen what the Elders of the House of Israel do in [the dark, every man in his chambers of imagery? For they say, 'Jehovah seeth us not! Jehovah hath forsaken the land.'"

(Ch. viii. 7-12.)

The Female Worshipers of Adonis.

He said also unto me, "Thou shalt also again see greater abominations than these do." Then He brought me to the door of the gate of the House of Jehovah, which was toward the north, and behold the women sat there weeping for **Tammuz**. Then said He unto me, "Hast thou seen this, Child of man? Thou shalt yet again see greater abominations than these."

(Ch. viii. 13-15.)

Sun Worship by the Priests.

Then He brought me into the inner court of the House of Jehovah, and behold! at the door of the Temple of Jehovah, between the porch and the altar there were the **twenty-five** men with their backs toward the Temple, and their faces towards the East, and they were worshipping towards the East.

Conclusion.

Then He said unto me, "Hast thou seen this, Child of man? Is it then too light a thing for the House of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here, that they have filled the land with violence, and again provoke Me: for lo! they hold Me in contempt. Therefore, will I

also deal in anger ; Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity : and though they cry in Mine ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them. (Ch. viii. 16-18.)

The Coming Punishment declared.

He cried also in my hearing, saying, "Draw near, ye that are executioners in the city ! even every one with his sword in his hand."

And behold ! six men came from the way of the upper gate which is towards the north, each having his sword in his hand ; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side ; and they went in and stood by the brazen altar. Now the Glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the **Cherubim**, whereon He was, to the threshold of the House ; and He called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn on his side, and Jehovah said unto him : "Go through the midst of the city, through Jerusalem, and make a **cross** upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." And to the others He said in my hearing, "Go ye after him through the city, and smite : let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity ; slay utterly old and young, both maidens, and little children, and women, but touch not any one upon whom is the cross ; and begin at My sanctuary."

Then they began at the Elders, who were before the House. And He said unto them, "Defile the House, and fill the courts with the slain : go ye forth."

And they went forth, and slew in the city.

(Ch. ix. 1-7.)

The Prophet's Intercession.

Then it came to pass while they were slaying them, and I was left that I fell upon my face, and cried and said :

“Ah Jehovah! Wilt Thou destroy all that remain in Israel, in Thy pouring out of Thy wrath upon Jerusalem.” Then He said unto me: “The iniquity of the House of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is filled with crime, and the city with injustice; for they said: ‘Jehovah hath forsaken the land, and Jehovah seeth not.’ Then as for Me also, Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will bring their way upon them.”

Then behold! the man clothed with linen, who had the inkhorn at his side reported the matter, saying “I have done as Thou hast commanded me.” (Ch. ix. 8-11.)

A Second Terrible Judgment.

Then I looked and behold! on the firmament that was above the head of the cherubim there appeared as it were a sapphire-stone with the appearance of a likeness of a throne above it. And He spake unto the man clothed in linen, and said: “Go in between the wheel-work, even under the cherubim, and fill thine hand with burning coals from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city.”

And he went in before my eyes.

Now the cherubim stood on the right side of the House, when the man went in, and the cloud filled the inner court. Then the Glory of Jehovah went up from the cherubim, and stood over the threshold of the House, and the House was filled with the cloud, and the court was filled with the brightness of the Glory of Jehovah. (*And the noise of the wings of the Cherubim was heard even to the outer court, as the Voice of God Almighty, when He speaketh.*)* And it came

* Omitted in LXX.

to pass that when He commanded the man clothed with linen, saying : "Take fire from between the wheels, from between the Cherubim," that he went in, and stood beside the wheels.* Then the Cherub stretched forth his hand from between the Cherubim unto the fire that was between the Cherubim, and took and put it into the hands of the man clothed in linen. He took it, and went out.

(Ch. x. 1-7.)

A fuller description of the Cherubim. A Third Vision.

Now there appeared in the Cherubim the form of a man's hand under their wings ; and when I looked behold four wheels by the Cherubim, one wheel by one Cherub, and another wheel by another Cherub ; and the appearance of the wheels was as the likeness of topaz. And as for their appearance they four had one likeness, as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel. When they went, they went toward their four sides, they turned not as they went, but to the place whither the front looked they followed ; they turned not as they went. And their rings, their hands, their wings, and the wheels were full of eyes round about, even their four wheels. As for the wheels they were called in my hearing "Wheel." Then the Glory of Jehovah departed from off the threshold of the House, and stood over the Cherubim ; and the Cherubim lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight. When they went out, the wheels also were beside them, and they stood at the door of the East gate of the House of Jehovah, and the Glory of the God of Israel was over them above. This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river Chabor : and I knew that they were Cherubim. Everyone had each four faces, and every one had four wings,

and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings. The face of the first was the face of an ox ; of the second, the face of a man ; of the third, the face of a lion ; and of the fourth, the face of an eagle.* And the likeness of their faces was the same faces which I saw by the river Chabor, their appearances, and themselves ; they went everyone straight forward. (Ch. x. 8-22.)

The False Confidence of Jerusalem rebuked.

The Spirit then lifted me up, and brought me unto the East gate of the House of Jehovah, which looketh eastward ; and behold ! at the door of the gate were five-and-twenty men. Among them I saw Jaazaniah, the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. Then said He unto me, " Child of man ! these are the men that are giving evil advice, and counselling what is wrong in this city. They are saying : ' The time to build houses is not near ; this city is as a caldron, and we as the flesh in it. '

" Therefore prophesy against them, Child of man ! Prophesy. Then the Spirit of Jehovah fell upon me, and said unto me " Say, Thus saith Jehovah : Thus have ye said, ' O House of Israel ' !

(For I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them.)

Ye have multiplied your slain in this city ;

Ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain.

Therefore thus saith Jehovah :

Your slain whom ye have heaped up in the midst—

They are the flesh : and this city is the caldron !

But I shall bring you forth out of the midst of it.

You fear the sword ! A sword will I bring upon you :

* Vv. 15-17 repeated from Ch. i. 19. Unite vv. 14 and 21.

Saith Jehovah.

Yea, I will bring you out of the midst thereof ;

I will deliver you into the hands of strangers : I will execute
My sentence among you.

Ye shall fall by the sword ! On the **border** of Israel will I
punish you !

And ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

This city shall not be your caldron ! Ye shall not be the
flesh in it !

I will punish you on the border of Israel.

And ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

For ye have not walked in My statutes, nor kept My law.

But after the way of the nations around have ye acted.

A solemn episode.

Now it happened while I was prophesying, that **Pelatiah** the son of Benaiah died. Then I fell down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice, "Ah Jehovah ! wilt Thou make a full end of those that remain in Israel ?"

(Ch. xi. 1-13.)

The attitude of Jerusalem to the Captivity. God's interest in them.

The Word of Jehovah also came unto me, saying :

Child of man ! Thy brethren, even thy brethren, who are fellow-captives with thyself, and the whole House of Israel are they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said : "They are far from Jehovah, unto us is the **land** given !"

Therefore say : Thus saith Jehovah :—

Truly I have cast them far off among the nations !

Yea, I have scattered them among the countries.

I have been little of a Sanctuary to them in the countries where they are.

Therefore say : Thus saith Jehovah :

I will yet gather you from among the peoples,

I will assemble you out of the countries, in which you were scattered,

And I will give you the land of Israel.

(Ch. xi. 14-17.)

The Restoration Promise.

Yea, they shall come thither. And they shall take out of it All their idols, and all their abominations !

I will give them a new heart ! A new spirit will I put within them !

I will take the stony heart out of them ! I will give them a heart of flesh !

So that they may walk in My ways, and keep and do My laws ;

Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

The punishment of evil-doers.

But those whose heart goeth after their idols, and abominations,

I will bring their conduct upon their own heads. Saith Jehovah.

(Ch. xi. 18-21.)

The Removal of the Divine Presence from Jerusalem.

Then the Cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them ; and the Glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the Glory of Jehovah went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the East side of the city. Afterwards the Spirit lifted me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God

into Chaldea to them of the Captivity. Then the vision that I had seen went up from me ; and I spake unto them of the Captivity all the things that Jehovah had shewed me.

The symbolic illustration of Removal. A coming Exile.

The Word of Jehovah also came unto me, saying : Child of man !

Thou dwellest in the midst of a house of rebellion !

They have eyes to see, but see not ; ears to hear, but hear not !

For they are a house of rebellion !

Therefore Child of man ! prepare thee things for a fitting, and remove them by day in their sight : yea, thou shalt remove from one place to another in their sight ; it may be they will consider, for they are a house of rebellion. And thou shalt bring forth thy things by day in their sight, as things for removing ; and thou shalt go hence at evening in their sight, as they that go forth into exile. Dig thou through the town wall in their sight and carry out thereby. In their sight thou shalt carry thy things upon thy shoulders : carry them forth in the darkness. Thou shalt cover thine eyes that thou mayst not see the land. For I have set thee for a sign unto the House of Israel.

And I did as I was commanded. I brought forth my things by day, as things for exile, and in the evening I dug through the wall by force. I brought them forth in the darkness, and carried them upon my shoulder in their sight.

(Ch. xii. 1-7.)

The application of the symbol to Zedekiah.

Then in the morning came the Word of Jehovah unto me, saying :

“Child of man ! Hath not the House of Israel, the

House of rebellion said unto thee, What doest thou? Say thou unto them: Thus saith Jehovah: (This burden is that of the prince in Jerusalem, and all the House of Israel which are in its midst.) Say, I am a sign for you! Just as I have done, so shall it be done unto them. They shall remove, and go into captivity. And the prince that is among them shall carry it upon his shoulder in the darkness, and shall go forth. They shall dig through the wall to carry it out thereby. He shall cover his eyes that he see not the land with his eyes. My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in My snare, and I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans; yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there. And I will scatter toward every wind all that are about him to help him, and all his forces: yea, I will draw out the sword after them. And they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries. But I will save a few of them from the sword, from the famine and the pestilence, that they may make known all their evil-doings among the nations, whither they come; and they shall know that I am Jehovah."

(Ch. xii. 8-16.)

The certain ruin of Jerusalem.

The Word of Jehovah also came unto me, saying:

"Child of man! Eat thy bread with fear, and drink thy water with trembling and care; and say unto the people of the land: 'Thus saith Jehovah, the God of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, in the land of Israel: They shall eat their bread with care, and drink their water with astonishment, for her land shall be emptied of all its fulness, because of the violence of all that dwell therein;

and the towns that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall be desolate. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah.'” (Ch. xii. 17-20.)

The disregard of Prophecy condemned.

The Word of Jehovah again came unto me, saying :

Child of man ! What is that saying that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, “The time is postponed, and prophecy finds no fulfilment” ?

Tell them, therefore, Thus saith Jehovah, I will make this saying to cease, and they shall no more use it as a common saying in Israel : for thou shalt say unto them, “The time is at hand, and the fulfilment of every prophecy.” For after this there shall be no vain prophecy, nor flattering divination in the midst of the House of Israel. For I Jehovah will speak, and the Word that I shall speak shall come to pass. It shall no longer be postponed ; but in your days, O House of rebellion, will I speak the Word, and perform it, saith Jehovah.” (Ch. xii. 21-25.)

The certainty of Prophecy and its nearness.

Again the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying :

Child of man ! Behold ! The House of Israel are saying that the prophecy that he uttereth is for a distant time, and he prophesieth of a time that is far in the future ! Therefore say unto them. Thus saith Jehovah, “None of My Words shall be any longer postponed, but the Word that I have spoken shall be fulfilled, saith Jehovah.”

(Ch. xii. 26-28.)

The conduct of false prophets condemned.

And the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying :

Child of man ! Prophecy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy,

And say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts,

Hear ye the Word of Jehovah ! Thus saith Jehovah !

Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit,
And have had no revelation !

O Israel ! Thy prophets are like foxes among ruins !

Ye have not gone up into the breaches, nor made up a fence,

That so the House of Israel might stand in battle in the day of Jehovah.

They have seen vanity, and lying divination, saying,

“ Oracle of Jehovah,” when Jehovah has not sent them.

They have hoped for the fulfilment of the word !

Have ye not seen a vain vision, and spoken lying divinations

When ye say, “ An oracle of Jehovah ” : and I have not spoken.
(Ch. xiii. 1-7.)

The punishment of false prophets.

Therefore thus saith Jehovah :

Because ye have spoken vanity, and prophesy lies :

Therefore, behold ! I am against you, saith Jehovah.

Yea, My hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity,
And that divine lies.

They shall not be in the Council of My People ;

They shall not be written in the Roll of the House of
Israel ;

They shall not enter into the land of Israel.

And ye shall know that I am Jehovah. (Ch. xiii. 8-9.)

The temporizing policy of false prophets.

Because, yea because they have deceived My people,
saying, Peace :

When there was no peace.

When the one build up a wall, they whitewash it over !

Say unto them who whitewash it, that it shall fall. There shall be an overflowing rain, and great hail stones shall fall, yea, a stormy wind shall burst forth. Then lo ! the wall shall fall : and will not men say to you ! Where is your whitewashing now ?

Therefore thus saith Jehovah :

I shall cause a stormy wind to burst forth in My fury :

A downpour of rain in My anger—great hail stones in My
rage

Shall come forth to consume it.

So will I break down the wall that ye have whitewashed ;

I will bring it to the ground, that its foundations will be
seen :

Yea it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in its midst :

And ye shall know, that I am Jehovah.

Thus will I accomplish My wrath upon the wall, and upon them that have whitewashed it, and will say unto you : The wall no longer exists, neither do they that whitewashed it ! O ye prophets of Israel who prophesied concerning Jerusalem, and who saw visions of peace for her, when there was no peace, saith Jehovah ! (Ch. xiii. 10-16.)

A message to false prophetesses.

Child of man ! look also towards the daughters of thy people, who prophesy out of their own heart ; and prophesy thou against them..

And say, Thus saith Jehovah :

Woe to those who sew coverings on all the joints of the
hand ;

Who make veils for heads of all sizes, to catch souls !

Ye would catch the souls of My people, but save your own souls !

Ye profane Me among My people for handfuls of barley
And for pieces of bread,

To slay the souls that should not die,

And to save alive the souls that should not live :—

By your lying to a people that listen to lies !

Wherefore, thus saith Jehovah :

Behold ! I am against your coverings, wherewith ye hunt
souls (as if they were birds)

I will tear them from your arms, and will let the souls go
free

Whom ye hunt, (as if they were birds).

Your veils also will I tear, and deliver My people out of
your hand,

And they shall be no more in your hand to be hunted ;

And ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

For with lies ye have made the hearts of the righteous sad,
whom I have not made sad.

Ye have strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he
should not return

From his wicked way, and be saved alive.

Therefore, ye shall see no more vanity, nor make divinations ;

For I will deliver My people out of your hand,

And ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

(Ch. xiii. 17-23.)

How to answer idolaters.

Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me, and the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying : “ Child of man ! these men have become engrossed

in idol worship, and have put an occasion to iniquity before their face—should I be enquired of at all by them? Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them :

Thus saith Jehovah :

Every man of the House of Israel, that is devoted to idolatry

And putteth an occasion for iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet,

I Jehovah will answer him (that cometh according to the multitude of his idols) :

That I may take the House of Israel in their own heart,

For they are all estranged from Me through their idols.

Therefore say unto the House of Israel: Thus saith Jehovah :

Repent, and turn from your idols ;

Yea, turn away your faces from all your abominations ;

For every one of the House of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel,

Who separateth himself from Me, and gives himself to idolatry,

Who putteth an occasion to iniquity before him, and cometh to a prophet

To enquire of him concerning Me:—I, Jehovah myself will answer him,

Yea, I will set My Face against that man, and make him an astonishment,

For a sign, and a proverb ; yea, I will cut him off out of My people,

And ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

And if the prophet be enticed, and sayeth anything,

I the Lord have enticed that prophet, and I will stretch out My Hand upon him

And will destroy him from the midst of My people Israel.
 And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity :
 The same shall be the punishment of enquirer and prophet.
 That the House of Israel may go no more astray from Me ;
 Neither be polluted any more, with all their transgressions :
 But may be a people for Me, and I a God unto them, saith
 Jehovah. (Ch. xiv. 1-11.)

The Divine discipline necessary. Four judgments.

The Word of Jehovah came again to me, saying :

(1) Child of man ! When a land sinneth against Me by
 trespassing grievously

And I stretch out My Hand against it, and break the staff
 of bread thereof

And send famine upon it, and cut off man and beast from it,
 Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it,
 They should deliver their own souls by their righteousness,
 saith Jehovah.

(2) Or if I cause beasts of prey to pass through a land,
 and they spoil it,

So that it be desolate, that no man pass through it, because
 of the beasts,

Though these three men were in it, "As I live," saith
 Jehovah,

They shall deliver neither sons nor daughters,

They only shall be delivered, and the land shall be desolate.

(3) Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and the sword
 go through that land

So that I cut off man and beast from it,

Though these three men were in it : they shall deliver
 neither son nor daughter ;

They only shall be delivered themselves.

(4) Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out
My fury
Upon it in blood, cutting off from it man and beast,
Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, "As I live,"
saith Jehovah,
Neither son nor daughter shall they deliver ;
By their righteousness they shall deliver their own souls.

The application.

For thus saith Jehovah :
When also I send My four severe judgments upon
Jerusalem—
The sword, and the famine, and the beast of prey, and the
pestilence,
To cut off from it man and beast,
Lo ! a remnant shall be left in it, which shall have sons
and daughters.
Behold ! they shall come forth to you ; ye shall see their
way, and their doings,
And ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have
brought on Jerusalem,
Even concerning all that I have brought upon it.
And they shall comfort you, when ye see their way, and
their doings.
Yea ye shall know that I have not done without cause
All that I have done in it, saith Jehovah.

(Ch. xiv. 12-23.)

CHAPTER IV.

ALLEGORIES AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF JUDGMENT (591 B.C.).

The illustration of the Vine-tree.

And the Word of Jehovah came unto Me, saying : Child

of man! What is the Vine-tree more than any tree, or the vine-branch which was among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to make any thing? or will men make a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire hath devoured both ends of it, and the middle of it is singed; will it be of use for anything? Behold! when it was whole it was of no use, how much less shall it be of any use when the fire hath devoured it, and it is singed!

Its application.

Therefore thus saith Jehovah :
 As the Vine-tree among the trees of the forest, which I have
 given to the fire for fuel,
 So have I given those that dwell in Jerusalem.
 Yea, I will set My Face against them :
 They shall go from one fire into another.
 And ye shall know that I am Jehovah when I set My Face
 against them.
 For I make the land a desolation, because of their trespass
 against Me, saith Jehovah. (Ch. xv. 1-8.)

Allegorical treatment of Israel's state.

And the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying :
 Child of man! Cause Jerusalem to know her abominations !
 And say, Thus saith Jehovah unto Jerusalem :
 Thy origin, and thy birth was in the land of the Canaanite :
 Thy father was the **Amorite**, and thy mother the **Hittite**.
 As for thy birth, in the day that thou wast born
 Thy navel string was not cut : thou wast not cleansed with
 water :
 Thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all :

None eye pitied thee to do any of these things unto thee, to
have compassion upon thee.

But thou wast cast out on the field, because thou wert
loathed

In the day in which thou wert born.

And I passed by thee, and saw thee weltering in thine own
blood.

And I said to thee, Though thou art in thy blood, Live !

Yea I said to thee, Though thou art in thy blood, Live !

I have caused thee to multiply, as the bud of the field :

Thou hast increased, and grown, and become beautiful.

Thy breasts were formed, and thy hair was grown, but thou
wast naked and bare.

And I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, and behold !

It was the time of puberty, and I betrothed and protected
thee,

Yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with
thee,

Saith Jehovah, and thou becamest Mine.

Then I washed thee with water : yea thoroughly

I washed thy blood from off thee, and I anointed thee
with oil.

I clothed thee also with many colours, and shod thee with
finest leather ;

I gave thee a head-band of fine linen, and a veil of silk ;

I decked thee also with ornaments—

I put bracelets upon thine arms, and a necklace on thy
neck.

I put also a ring on thy nose, and earrings in thine ears,

And a beautiful crown upon thy head.

Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver :

Thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and many colours :

Thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil :
 Yea, thou wast exceedingly beautiful, and didst attain unto
 royal estate,
 And thy renown went forth among the nations for thy
 beauty ;
 For it was perfect through My adornment, which I had put
 upon thee,
 Saith Jehovah. (Ch. xvi. 1-14.)

Jerusalem's false step.

But thou trustedst in thy beauty ! Thou becamest unfaith-
 ful because of thy renown !
 Yea, thou didst place thyself at the disposal of every passer-
 by—of anybody !
 Thou didst take thy garments, and didst deck the high
 places with many colours,
 Thou wast unfaithful to Me there ! Thou shouldst not have
 gone there ! It should not be !
 Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of My gold, and My
 silver, which I gave thee
 And madest for thyself images like man, and didst worship
 them !
 Thou tookest thy coloured garments, and didst cover
 them !
 Thou didst set My oil, and My incense before them !
 My bread also, which I gave to thee—fine flour, and oil,
 and honey.
 I fed thee, yet thou didst set it before them for a sweet
 savour !
 Thus has it happened !! Saith Jehovah.
 (Ch. xvi. 15-19.)

Jerusalem's idolatrous practices set forth.

Thou didst also take thy sons, and thy daughters, who
thou didst bear unto me,

And these didst thou sacrifice to be devoured (in the fire)
Was thine infidelity little? In that thou didst slay My
children,

In causing them to pass through the fire unto them!

In all thy abominations and infidelities thou didst
remember the days of thine youth,

When thou wast naked and bare—lying weltering in thy blood!

And it came to pass after all thy wickedness,

(Woe! Woe unto thee! saith Jehovah)

That thou didst also build for thyself a vaulted chamber,

And didst make for thyself a lofty place in every street;

At every top of a road thou didst build a lofty place,

Thou hast prostituted thy beauty! Thou didst evil

With every passer-by! Thou hast multiplied infidelity!

Thus hast thou acted also with the Egyptians, so licentious!

Thou hast increased thy infidelity, provoking Me to anger!

Behold, therefore, I stretched out My hand over thee and
diminished thy portion!

I delivered thee unto the will of those that hated thee,

The daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed of thy
lewd way.

Thou didst ally thyself also with the Assyrians, still
unsatisfied;

Yea, thus didst thou carry on with them, and wast not
satisfied!

Nay, thou didst multiply thine alliances with merchant
lands, even to **Chaldea**!

And yet with this thou wast not satisfied!

(Ch. xvi. 20-29.)

An expression of surprised perplexity at the state of things.

What shall I do with My covenant with thee, saith Jehovah !
 Seeing thou doest these things, acting as a weak, faithless
 one !

Building thy vaulted chamber, at the head of every road ;
 And making thy lofty place in every street !
 Thou hast not acted as the harlot, that scoffeth at her hire,
 (Oh unfaithful wife, taking strangers, while still married !)
 Harlots receive gifts, but thou givest them to all thy lovers !
 Thou hirest them that they may come unto thee on every
 side !

Thou actest contrary to other fallen women !
 For thou committest whoredom, when none cometh after thee !
 Thou givest a hire ! And no hire is given unto thee !
 Thou art therefore contrary unto others !

Judgment pronounced.

Wherefore O fallen one ! hear the Word of Jehovah.

Thus saith Jehovah :

Because thy body has been disgraced, and thy nakedness
 discovered

Through thy infidelity with thy lovers, and with all the
 idols of thy abominations,

And through the blood of thy children, whom thou didst
 give unto them :

Behold, therefore, I will gather all thy lovers, to whom thou
 hast been pleasant,

All them whom thou hast loved, and all them whom thou
 hast hated,

I will even gather them round about against thee,
 And discover all thy shame unto them, that they may see it !

Yea, I will pronounce upon thee the sentences pronounced
on adulteresses

And murderers! I will sentence thee to death in fury, and
jealousy!

I will also give thee into their hand;

They shall throw down thy vaulted chamber; they shall
break down thy lofty places!

They shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and take thy fair
jewels,

Yea, they shall leave thee naked and bare!

They shall also call up an assembly against thee:

And they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee
through with their swords;

They shall burn thine houses, and before many women
punish thee.

I will cause thee to cease from thine infidelity, and give
hire no more.

So will I satisfy my fury towards thee; so shall my jealousy
depart from thee;

Then I will be quiet, and will no more be angry.

The reason set forth.

Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth,
but hast vexed me in all these things;

Behold therefore, I will also bring thy way upon thee, saith
Jehovah:

For thus hast thou been unfaithful in all thy abominations.

(Ch. xvi. 30-43.)

Jerusalem worse than Sodom.

Behold! every one that useth proverbs shall use this
proverb against thee, saying:—"As is the mother, so is her
daughter."

Thou art thy mother's daughter—loathing her husband, and
children !

Thou art thy sisters' sister—loathing their husbands, and
children !

Thy mother was an Hittite ! And thy father an Amorite !
Thine elder sister is **Samaria**, and her daughters on your
north ;

Thy younger sister is **Sodom**, and her daughters on your south.
Yet hast thou not walked after their ways, nor done their
abominations,

Save only for a little, for thou becamest worse than they in
all thy ways.

I declare, saith Jehovah, Sodom thy sister hath not acted,
She and her daughters, as thou, and thy daughters have.

Behold ! this was the iniquity of thy sister, Sodom ;
Pride, luxury, and ease were in her, and her daughters ;
The hand of the poor and needy she never helped.

Yea, they were haughty, and behaved wickedly in My sight,
And I took them away, whenever I saw it.

As for Samaria, the half of thy evil, she hath not done !

For thou hast done more wicked things than they !

And hast justified thy sisters by all the wrong thou hast done.

Thou also shalt bear thine own shame, in giving judgment
for thy sisters.

Through your more wicked conduct, they are more
righteous than thou ;

Yea thou shalt also be ashamed, and confounded, in giving
judgment for thy sisters. (Ch. xvi. 44-53.)

Restoration promised.

But I will bring again their captivity, the captivity of
Sodom, and her daughters ;

The captivity of Samaria, and her daughters ;
And I will bring again thy captivity in the midst of them.
That thou may'st bear thine own shame, and be confounded,
For all thou hast done, in having comforted them.
And thy sisters, Sodom, and her daughters shall be restored,
And Samaria, and her daughters shall be restored,
And thou, and thy daughters shall be restored.
Yet thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thee in the day
of thy pride !
Before thy sin was seen, as now, for the reproach of the
daughters of **Edom**,
And her neighbours, the daughters of the Philistines, who
despise thee ;
Thou hast paid the penalty of thy sin, and evil, saith
Jehovah.

For thus saith Jehovah :—I will even deal with thee as
thou hast acted, in despising the **oath**, to break the
covenant.

The Divine Covenant remembered.

Yet I will remember My covenant, made with thee in the
days of thy youth,
And I will establish with thee an everlasting covenant.
Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed
When I shall take thy sisters, thine elder, and younger,
And give them unto thee for daughters, not by thy covenant.
For I will establish My covenant with thee ! And thou
shalt know that I am Jehovah !
That thou mayest call to mind, and be confounded, and be
silent with shame
When I forgive thee for all thou hast done, saith Jehovah.

(Ch. xvi. 54-63.)

CHAPTER V.

ZEDEKIAH'S CONDUCT CONDEMNED (590 B.C.).

The illustration of the great Eagle—Nebuchadrezzar.

The Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying : Child of man ! Put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the House of Israel, and say :—

Thus saith Jehovah :—

A great **eagle**, with large wings, long pinioned, covered with feathers of various colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the highest cedar branch ; he cropt off the top of its young twigs, and carried it away into a land of trade, and set it in the midst of a city of merchants. He also took of the seed of the land, and planted it in a fertile field, by copious streams, as a willow tree he planted it. And it grew, and became a spreading vine of low size that its branches might turn towards him, and its roots might be under him. Thus it became a vine, and brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs. There was also another great eagle with large wings, and many feathers, and behold ! this vine did bend its roots toward him, and shot forth its branches toward him that he might water it more than in the beds where it was planted. It was planted in good soil by copious streams, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit and be a goodly vine.

The consequence of rebellion.

Say thou, Thus saith Jehovah :—Shall it prosper ? Shall he not pull up the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof that it wither ? All its fresh springing leaves shall wither ; even without great strength, or many people the

roots of it shall be plucked up. And behold ! being planted, shall it prosper ? Shall it not utterly wither when the east wind toucheth it, wither out of the beds in which it was planted ?
(Ch. xvii. 1-10.)

The Application to Zedekiah.

And the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying : Say now to the House of rebellion :—" Know ye not what these things mean ? Tell them that the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, and took the king thereof, and the princes, and led them with him to Babylon, and took of the royal seed, and made a covenant with him, and took an oath from him. He also took the mighty of the land, that the kingdom might be subject, and not raise itself up : that by observing his treaty it might continue. But he (Zedekiah) rebelled against him, and sent ambassadors into Egypt, that they might supply him with horses, and large forces. Shall he prosper ? Shall he that doeth such things escape ? Shall he break the treaty and be unpunished ? I solemnly declare, saith Jehovah, that in Babylon, in the place where the king dwelleth that made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose treaty he broke, even with him shall he die. Neither shall **Pharaoh** with a large army, and great forces be of any use to him in war, by casting up mounts, and building forts to cut off many persons, seeing he hath despised his oath in breaking a treaty. When lo ! he had given his hand, and done all these things, he shall not escape. Therefore thus saith Jehovah : I solemnly declare that it is My oath that he hath despised, and My covenant that he hath broken ; even it will I bring upon him. And I will spread My net upon him, and he shall be taken in My snare, and I will bring him to Babylon,

and will charge him there with the sin that he hath done against Me; and all his choice men with all his forces shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered to all the winds. And ye shall know that I, Jehovah, have spoken.” (Ch. xvii. 11-21.)

A divine planting.

Thus saith Jehovah:—I also will take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and plant it. I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon a high and lofty mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it, and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar. Under it shall dwell every beast, and every kind of bird shall dwell in the shade of its branches. And all the trees of the field shall know that I, Jehovah, have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish.

I, Jehovah, have spoken, and done it.

(Ch. xvii. 22-24.)

A theodicy, or justification of the Ways of God.

Individual responsibility.

The Word of Jehovah came unto me again, saying :

“What mean ye that ye use this proverb in the land of Israel, saying :—

“Fathers eat sour grapes, and their children's teeth are set on edge”?

“I declare,” saith Jehovah, “ye shall not be allowed any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold! All souls are Mine. As the soul of the father, so also is the soul of the son Mine. The soul that sinneth it shall die.”

(1) A righteous man described.

If a man be righteous, and has done justice and righteousness, one who has not eaten with the blood, who has not lifted up his eyes to the idols of the House of Israel, who hath not committed adultery, nor become impure. One who has not oppressed any, who has restored to the debtor his pledge, who has not robbed any one, who has fed the hungry, and clothed the naked ; who has not lent on usury, who has not taken interest, who has kept his hand from wrong-doing ; who has judged fairly between man and man ; who has walked in My statutes, and hath kept My laws, and done them, he is a righteous man ; he shall surely live, saith Jehovah.

(Ch. xviii. 1-9.)

(2) A guilty man described: the bad son of a good father.

If he have a son, who is a man of violence, a shedder of blood, and is one that doeth any of these things (that are forbidden), and does not do (what is prescribed) ; being one who has eaten with blood, and committed adultery ; who has oppressed the poor and needy, who has robbed any, who has not restored the pledge ; and one who has lifted up his eyes to the idols, who has committed abomination ; who has lent upon usury, and taken interest—Shall he live ? He shall not live. He who hath done all these abominations shall surely die ; his guilt shall be upon himself.

(Ch. xviii. 10-13.)

(3) The good son of a bad father.

Or lo ! if this one have a son that seeth all the sins, that his father hath committed, and feareth, and does not commit the same, if he be one who hath not eaten with

blood, who hath not lifted up his eyes to the idols of the House of Israel, who hath not committed adultery, who hath not oppressed any one, who hath not taken any pledge, who hath not robbed any, who hath given his bread to the hungry, and clothed the naked, who hath not wronged the poor, who hath not received usury, nor interest, who hath executed My judgments, who hath walked in My statutes—he shall not die for the iniquity of his father; he shall surely live. While his father for his cruel oppression, his robbery, and wrong-doing among his people, lo ! he himself shall die for his iniquity.

(Ch. xviii. 14-18.)

An appeal to the people.

And ye say, “Wherefore doth not the son suffer for the iniquity of his father?”

When the son hath done what is lawful and right, hath kept all My statutes, and done them, he shall surely live. ‘The soul that sinneth, it shall die.’ The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of his father, neither shall the father suffer for the iniquity of his son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be for himself; and the wickedness of the wicked shall be for him. And if the wicked will turn from all the sins that he hath committed, and keep all My statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. All the sins that he hath committed shall not be mentioned unto him, for his righteousness that he hath done (*i.e.* in turning) he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith Jehovah; have I not pleasure rather that he should turn from his ways and live? And when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and

committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All the righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; for the wrong that he hath done, and for the sin that he hath committed,—for them shall he die.

(Ch. xviii. 19-24.)

The appeal repeated.

And ye say, "The Way of Jehovah is not equal."

Hear now, O House of Israel;—Is not My Way equal? Are not your ways unequal?

When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth for it; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.

Again, when a wicked man turneth away from the wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall preserve his soul alive. Because he feareth, and turneth away from all the transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. Yet saith the House of Israel, 'The Way of Jehovah is not equal!' O House of Israel, Are not My Ways equal? Are not your ways unequal?

A Call to Repentance.

Therefore I will judge you, O House of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith Jehovah. Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, that they be not a stumbling-block of iniquity unto you. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O House of Israel. For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith Jehovah; wherefore turn, and live.

(Ch. xviii. 30-32.)

A LAMENTATION OVER THE ROYAL HOUSE.

Take thou up now a lamentation for the royal House of Israel.

And say :—

Concerning Jehoahaz (608 B.C.).

How was thy mother a lioness—among the lions !
Among young lions she couched—she reared her whelps !
And she brought up one of her whelps ; he became a
young lion,
He learned to catch the prey ; he devoured men !
The nations heard about him ; he was taken in their pit.
Yea they brought him with hooks unto the land of Egypt.

Concerning Jehoiachin (597 B.C.).

And she saw that she had waited ; her hope was lost.
Then she took another of her whelps ; she made him a
young lion.
He walked among the lions ; he became a young lion.
He learned to catch the prey ; he devoured men !
Yea, he broke down their palaces ; he laid waste their cities.
And the land, and its fulness, was made desolate, by the
noise of his roaring.
Then the nations set against him, on every side from the
provinces.
They spread their net over him ; he was taken in their pit.
They put him in ward in chains, and brought him to the
King of Babylon ;
That his voice should no more be heard, upon the
mountains of Israel.

Concerning Zedekiah (597-586 B.C.).

Thy mother was like a vine (in height), planted by the waters.

She was fruitful, and full of branches, because of copious streams ;
She had strong stems forming royal sceptres ;
Their height was exalted high among the clouds ;
They appeared in their height, among the many branches.
But she was plucked up in fury !
She was cast down to the ground ! The east wind dried up her fruit !
Her strong stems were broken, and withered ; the fire consumed them.
And now she is planted in the wilderness, a dry and thirsty ground.
Yea, fire is gone out of a stem of her branches ;
It hath devoured her fruit ! No strong stem for royal sceptre remaineth !
This is a lamentation, and is become a lamentation.

(Ch. xix. 1-14.)

CHAPTER VI.

A RETROSPECT OF THE DIVINE DEALINGS WITH ISRAEL AND A GREAT INDICTMENT (590 B.C.).

The prophet and the elders of Israel.

Now it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month that certain of the Elders of Israel came to enquire of Jehovah, and sat before me. Then the Word of Jehovah came unto me saying : Child of man ! Speak unto the Elders of Israel and say unto them :—Thus saith Jehovah. Are ye come to enquire of Me ? I declare, saith Jehovah, I will not be enquired of

by you. Wilt thou judge them, Child of man? Wilt thou judge them? Cause them to know the abominations of their fathers, and say unto them, Thus saith Jehovah :—

In the day when I chose Israel, and swore unto the seed of the House of Jacob, and made Myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I swore unto them, saying, ‘I am Jehovah, your God;’ on that day I swore unto them that I would bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land which I had looked out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands, and I said unto them,—“Cast ye away every man, the abominations after which his eyes have gone, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt :—I Jehovah am your God. But they rebelled against Me, and would not hearken unto Me. They did not every one cast away the abominations, on which he had looked, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said, I will pour out My fury upon them to accomplish My anger against them in the land of Egypt, but I wrought for My Name’s sake that it should not be profaned before the nations, among whom they were, and to whom I made Myself known in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt.

(Ch. xx. 1-9.)

The Exodus experience.

Yea, I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the Wilderness; and I gave them My statutes, and caused them to know My laws, which if a man do, by them he shall live. I also gave them My **Sabbaths** to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I Jehovah am He that sanctifieth them. But the House of Israel rebelled against Me in the Wilderness; they walked not in My statutes, and they

despised My laws, which if a man do, he shall live by them, and My Sabbaths they greatly profaned ;—then I said, ‘I will pour out My fury upon them to consume them.’ Yet I wrought for My Name’s sake that it should not be profaned before the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out ; but I also swore unto them in the Wilderness that I would not bring them into the land (which I had given) flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands, because they despised My laws, and walked not in My statutes, but profaned My Sabbaths, for their hearts went after their idols. Yet Mine eye spared them. I did not destroy, nor make an end of them in the Wilderness ; but I said unto their children in the Wilderness, ‘Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their principles, nor defile yourselves with their idols. I Jehovah am your God ; walk in My statutes, and keep My laws to do them, and hallow My Sabbaths, for they shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I Jehovah am your God.’

(Ch. xx. 10-20.)

A race not upright in heart.

But these children rebelled against Me ; they walked not in My statutes, neither kept nor did My laws (those laws in the keeping of which there is life) ; they profaned My Sabbaths:—then I said, ‘I will pour out My fury upon them to accomplish My anger against them in the Wilderness. Yet (I drew back My hand and) I wrought for My Name’s sake that it should not be profaned among the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out. I swore unto them also in the Wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the lands, because they had not kept My laws, but had despised My statutes, and pro-

faned My Sabbaths, and had worshipped the idols of their fathers.' Then I also **gave** them statutes, which were not for their good, and laws, which would not cause them to live, and I polluted them in their own gifts:—e.g. in the setting apart of all the first-born, this I made that it should be a cause of terror. (That they might know that I am Jehovah.) (Ch. xx. 21-26.)

The prophet's conclusion. Israel's history in Canaan.

Therefore, Child of man ! Speak unto the House of Israel, and say unto them : Thus saith Jehovah :—Still in this have your fathers blasphemed Me in trespassing against Me. When I brought them into the land which I had sworn to give them, then they saw every high hill, and all the leafy **trees**, and there they offered their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their **offering** ; there also they caused their sweet savour, and there they poured out their drink offerings.* Wherefore say unto the House of Israel :—Thus saith Jehovah :

Ye are polluted after the manner of your fathers ! Ye act unfaithfully to Me after their abominations. For when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day—Shall I then be enquired of by you, O House of Israel ? I declare, saith Jehovah, I will not be enquired of by you. Yet that which you purpose shall not be allowed, when ye say, 'We will become as the nations, as the families of the lands, and serve wood and stone.' (Ch. xx. 27-32.)

A divine vindication promised.

I solemnly declare, saith Jehovah, Surely with a mighty

* Ver. 29 Difficult, and probably a gloss. See Notes, p. 231.

hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out will I be king over you ! Yea, I will bring you out from among the peoples, and will gather you out of the countries, wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the **Wilderness** of the peoples, and there will I plead with you face to face. Even as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith Jehovah, yea I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you in by number. I will purge out from your midst those that rebel, and transgress against Me ; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel ; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah. (Ch. xx. 33-38.)

The day of Restoration.

As for you, O House of Israel : Thus saith Jehovah :— Go, serve ye every one his idols ! But hereafter ye shall certainly hearken unto Me, and no more profane My holy Name with your gifts, and with your idols ; for in Mine holy Mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith Jehovah, there shall all the House of Israel, all of them in the land, serve Me. There will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings,* and the best of your oblations, with all your holy things. I will accept you in your offering of sweet savour, when I bring you out from the peoples, and gather you out of the lands wherein ye have been scattered ; and I shall be hallowed in you before the nations, and ye shall know that I am Jehovah when I bring you again into the land

* See Exodus xxv. 2.

of Israel, into the country which I swore to give unto your fathers. And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, whereby ye have been defiled and ye shall loath yourselves in your own sight for all the evil that ye have done. Yea, ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have wrought with you for My Name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O House of Israel, saith Jehovah.

(Ch. xx. 39-44.)

The approaching judgment.

Then the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying :

Child of man ! Set thy face toward the south, and speak toward the south, yea, prophesy against the forest of the field in the south. And say to the forest of the south ; Hear the Word of Jehovah !

Thus saith Jehovah :—

Behold ! I kindle a fire in thee ! It shall destroy every green tree in thee. Every dry tree !

The burning flame shall not be quenched ! All faces shall be scorched. From North to South !

All flesh shall see that I Jehovah have kindled it ; it shall not be quenched.

Then said I, Ah Jehovah ! They say of me, Doth he not speak parables ? (Ch. xx. 45-49 or xxi. 1-5 in Hebrew.)

The parable defined. The divine Sword.

Then the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying : Child of man ! Set thy face toward Jerusalem, and speak towards its Holy Place, and prophesy against the land of Israel ; and say unto the land of Israel :

Thus saith Jehovah :—Behold ! I am against thee, and I will draw forth My sword out of its sheath, and will cut off

from thee the righteous, and the wicked. Seeing that I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked, My sword shall go forth from its sheath against all flesh from South to North, that all flesh may know that I Jehovah have drawn forth My sword out of its sheath ; it shall not return any more.

The prophet's agitation.

Sigh therefore, Child of man ! Smiting upon thy sides !
And with bitterness, sigh before their eyes !

And it shall be when they say unto thee, Wherefore sighest thou ? that thou shalt answer :—

Because of what I have heard ! For it cometh !

Every heart shall melt ! All hands shall be feeble !

Every spirit shall faint ! All knees shall be paralyzed !

Lo ! It cometh ! It shall be brought to pass ! saith Jehovah.

(Ch. xxi. 1-7.)

A lamentation over the coming judgment.

And the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying :

Child of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith Jehovah !

Say :—

A sword ! A sword ! It is sharpened, and also made ready !

It is sharpened for slaughter ! It is made ready to flash !*

Yea, He hath given it to be ready, that it may be handled ;

This sword is sharpened, and made ready, to put in the
hand of the slayer !

Cry and howl, Child of man ! It shall be upon My people.

It shall be upon all the princes of Israel !

They are delivered over to the sword with My people.

Therefore smite upon thy thigh. For there is a trial !

* For 2nd clause of ver. 10 see Notes, p. 231.

And what if the sceptre that despiseth should be no more?
saith Jehovah.

Thou, therefore, Child of man ! Prophecy, yea, smite thine
hands together !

Let the sword be doubled, tripled ! The sword that slays !
The sword to slay the great man—that compasseth them
about !

I have caused the sword to flash against all their gates,
That their heart may faint, and the stumbling-blocks be many.
Ah ! It is made bright ! It is made ready for slaughter !
“Gather thee together, go to the right ! Set thyself in array !
Go to the left, whichever way thy edge is set !”

I will also smite Mine hands together ! I will cause My
fury to rest.

I Jehovah have spoken.

(Ch. xxi. 8-17.)

Nebuchadrezzar on the war path (589 B.C.).

The Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying :—

Now thou, Child of man ! make thee two ways, by which
the sword of the king of Babylon may come ; let them both
lead out of one land. And mark thou out a hand post,
mark it out at a cross-way to the city. Make a way that the
sword may come even to **Rabbath** of the Ammonites, and
to Judah and Jerusalem in her midst. For the king of
Babylon standeth at the parting of the way, at the head of
the two ways, consulting the auguries. He shaketh his
arrows, he consulteth the **teraphim**, he looketh at the liver.
In his right hand is the lot “Jerusalem,” to appoint batter-
ing-rams, to open the mouth with a cry, to lift up the voice
with shouting, even to appoint battering rams against the
gates, to cast up a mount, to build a fort. But it shall be
unto them as a false augury in their sight, who have sworn

oaths. Yet He will call to remembrance their iniquity that they may be punished. Therefore thus saith Jehovah :— Because ye have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are discovered, so that your sins, your evil doings do appear :—because that ye have caused them to be remembered, ye shall be taken in them.

A warning to Zedekiah, king of Judah.

And thou rejected, wicked king of Israel !

Thy day is come ! The time of iniquity has its end !

Thus saith Jehovah :—

Remove the diadem ! Take off the crown ! This is not to be !
Those that are low shall be raised ; the high shall be cast down !

I will overturn, overturn, overturn ; what is shall be no more ;
Until that shall come that is right, and I shall give it to him.

Ammon also warned.

Thou Child of man ! Prophecy also, and say :

Thus saith Jehovah concerning the Children of Ammon,
and their reproach, even say thou :—

The sword, the sword is drawn for slaughter !

It is prepared thoroughly to flash !

(Whilst they declare vain things unto thee, whilst they
divine a lie unto thee)

To lay thee upon the necks of the wicked, that are
mortally wounded.

When their day is come, when the time of iniquity is at
its end.

Return it into its sheath ! In the place where thou wast born,
In the land of thy nativity, will I judge thee !

I will pour out My fury upon thee ! I will blow against thee
in the fire of My wrath ;

I will deliver thee into the hand of fierce men, skilled in destruction.

Thou shalt be fuel for the fire ! Thy blood shall be shed in the land !

Thou shalt be no more remembered ! I Jehovah have spoken. (Ch. xxi. 18-32.)

A great indictment of Jerusalem.

The Word of Jehovah also came unto me, saying :

Now thou Child of man ! wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the guilty city ?

Make known then unto her all her abominations.

And say thou, Thus saith Jehovah :—

First charge. Crimes of violence.

O city that sheddest blood in thy midst ! That her time may come !

That maketh idols unto herself ! That she may be defiled !

Thou hast become guilty by the blood, that thou hast shed ;

Thou hast defiled thyself by the idols, which thou hast made ;

Thou hast caused thy days to draw near, and hastened thy years ;

Therefore I have made thee a reproach unto the peoples, and a laughing stock unto all countries.

Both those that are near, and those that are distant—

They shall mock thee, O thou disgraced, and troubled one !

Behold the kings of Israel ! Every one shed as much blood as he could.

Second charge. Breaches of law.

In thy midst they have despised father and mother :

In thy midst have they oppressed the stranger ;
 In thy midst have they vexed the widow and the fatherless ;
 Thou hast despised My holy things ! Thou hast profaned
 My Sabbaths !

Third charge. Immorality.

In thy midst are men that carry tales to shed blood ;
 In thy midst are those that eat with blood ;
 In thy midst are those that commit lewdness ;
 In thy midst have they committed incest ;
 In thy midst have they dishonoured her that is set apart,
 They have committed adultery, and fornication,
 Both daughter-in-law, and sister being dishonoured.

Fourth charge. Bribery and corruption.

In thy midst they have received gifts to shed blood,
 They have taken usury, and heavy interest ;
 They have in greed taken gains by extortion ;
 They have forsaken Me, saith Jehovah.

(Ch. xxii. 1-12.)

The sentence.

Behold therefore ! I have smitten My hand at thy dishonest
 gains,
 And at the crimes which have been done in thy midst.
 Can thy heart endure, or can thy hands be strong
 When I shall deal with thee ? I Jehovah have spoken, and
 will perform.
 Yea, I will scatter thee among the nations, and disperse
 thee among the countries,
 And I will consume thy impurity out of thy midst.
 And I will be profaned in thee in the sight of the nations.
 Then thou shalt know that I am Jehovah.

(Ch. xxii. 13-16.)

The similitude of a furnace, and melting.

The Word of Jehovah came also unto me, saying :

Child of man ! The House of Israel is become to Me all dross ;

They are all brass, and tin, and iron, and lead

In the midst of the furnace ! They are the dross of silver !

Therefore thus saith Jehovah : Because ye are all become dross,

Behold ! therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem

As they gather silver, and brass, and lead and tin

Into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it,

So will I gather you in Mine anger, and in My fury,

And I will leave you there, and melt you.

Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of My wrath

And ye shall be melted in the midst thereof.

As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in its midst,

And ye shall know that I Jehovah have poured out My fury upon you. (Ch. xxii. 17-22.)

The condemnation of all classes.

The Word of Jehovah also came unto me, saying :

Child of man ! Say unto her,

Thou art a land not rained upon, nor moistened in the day of wrath.

Thy princes, in thy midst, are like a roaring lion, seizing the prey ;

They devour men ; they seize treasure, and precious things,

They have made her widows many in her midst.
Her priests have done violence to My law, and profaned
My holy things ;
They have put no difference between the holy, and the
profane ;
They have made no distinction between the unclean, and
the clean.
They have hid their eyes from My Sabbaths ; I am pro-
faned among them.
Her leaders in her midst are like wolves seizing upon the
prey—
Shedding blood, destroying souls, getting dishonest gain.
Her prophets have covered them over with whitewash—
seeing vanity,
And divining lies unto them, saying, “ Thus saith Jehovah,”
When Jehovah hath not spoken.
The people of the land have been guilty of oppression, and
robbery ;
They have vexed the poor and needy ; yea, they have
wrongfully oppressed the stranger.
And I sought for some one among them to make up the
fence
To stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I might
not destroy it,
But I found none.
Therefore have I poured out My wrath upon them,
I have consumed them with the fire of My anger ;
Their own way have I brought upon their heads, saith
Jehovah. (Ch. xxii. 23-31.)

The indictment continued under a similitude.

The Word of Jehovah came again unto me, saying :

Child of man ! There were two women, the daughters of the same mother, and they became unfaithful in Egypt, they were unfaithful in their youth ; there were their breasts pressed, and there were their virgin bosoms handled. Their names were **Oholah**, the greater, and **Oholibah** her sister. They became Mine and they bare sons and daughters ; and thus were they called, Samaria is **Oholah**, and Jerusalem is **Oholibah**.

Israel's backsliding, and punishment.

Now **Oholah** became unfaithful when she was Mine, and gave her affection to the warlike **Assyrians**, clothed in blue, governors and deputies, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses. Thus she acted unfaithfully towards Me with them, with all those that were the best of Assyria, and she defiled herself with all the idols of those on whom she had bestowed her affections. She did not give up the evil practices, which she had brought from Egypt ; for in her youth she acted thus, and they dishonoured her, and corrupted her. Wherefore I delivered her into the hands of her lovers, into the hands of the **Assyrians** upon whom she doted. They degraded her ; they took her sons and daughters, and slew her with the sword. She then became a warning to women, for they executed judgment upon her. (Ch. xxiii. 1-10.)

The greater backsliding of Judah.

Now when her sister, **Oholibah** saw this, she became more corrupt in her forbidden love than she, and became even more unfaithful in her conduct. She doted upon the warlike **Assyrians**, clothed in blue, governors and deputies, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men. Then she saw that she was corrupted ;

they both took one way, and she added to her unfaithfulness. For when she saw men pourtrayed upon the wall, pictures of **Chaldæans** painted with vermillion, with ornamental waistbands, and flowing turbans, all of them princes in appearance, after the likeness of the Babylonians of Chaldæa, the land of their nativity—she doted greatly upon them, and sent ambassadors unto them into Chaldæa. Then the Babylonians formed an alliance with her, and corrupted her by their evil ways, yea, she was polluted with them, and her mind became alienated from them. So she discovered her infidelity, and her unfaithfulness. And My mind was alienated from her, as My mind had been alienated from her sister. Yet she multiplied her unfaithfulness, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, when she had acted unfaithfully in the land of Egypt, for she doted upon their allies, whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and whose passion is like that of horses ; thus thou didst recall the time when thou wert in alliance with Egyptian ways, and thy virgin purity was destroyed. (Ch. xxiii. 11-21.)

The judgment upon Jerusalem.

Therefore, O Oholibah, thus saith Jehovah :—
 Behold ! I will raise up against thee thine allies, from whom thou art alienated.
 I will bring them against thee, from every side.
 Babylonians, and all the Chaldæans, **Pekod**, and Shoa, and Koa,
 All the Assyrians along with them—all of them desirable young men ;
 Governors, and deputies, heroes and chiefs,—all of them horsemen.
 And they shall come against thee from the North, with waggons and wheels,

With a crowd of peoples equipped with buckler, shield
and helmet all around.

Unto them I give over the right to judge, and they shall
judge thee as they choose.

Yea, I set My jealousy against thee, and they shall deal
in anger with thee.

They shall take away thy nose, and ears ; thy remnant
shall be slain.

They shall take thy sons, and daughters ; thy remnant
shall be burnt up.

They shall also take away thy garments, and thy beautiful
jewels.

Thus will I make thy unfaithful ways to cease from thee,
and thine infidelity in thee since thou wert in the land of
Egypt, so that thou shalt not lift up thine eyes unto them,
nor remember Egypt any more. For thus saith Jehovah :—
Behold ! I deliver thee into the hand of those whom thou
hatest,

Into the hand of those from whom thy mind is alienated.

They shall deal with thee in hatred, and take away thy
produce,

They shall leave thee naked and bare ; the folly of thy sin
shall be seen,

Thy lewdness and infidelity have brought these things
upon thee ;

For thou hast gone with the nations, and been polluted
with their idols.

Thou hast walked in thy sister's ways—her cup will I give
into thy hand.

Thus saith Jehovah :—

The cup of thy sister thou shalt drink, deep and large, and
full.

(Thou shalt be laughed to scorn, and had in derision.)
It is full of destruction, and suffering—a cup of astonishment

And desolation—the cup of thy sister Samaria.

Yea, thou shalt drink it, suck it out, and gnaw its sides ;
And thou shalt tear thine own breasts. For I have spoken,
Saith Jehovah.

Therefore thus saith Jehovah :
Because thou hast forgotten Me, and cast Me behind thy
back,

Therefore thou must suffer for thy lewdness and infidelity.

(Ch. xxiii. 22-35.)

Another indictment of Israel and Judah.

Jehovah also said unto me, Child of man ! Wilt thou judge Oholah, and Oholibah ? Then declare unto them their sins. For they are unfaithful, and bloodguilty ; with their idols have they been unfaithful to Me, yea they have also caused the sons, whom they bare unto Me to pass for them through the fire to be consumed. Moreover have they done this unto Me—they have desecrated My Holy place, and profaned My Sabbaths. For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into My Holy place to desecrate it : and lo ! thus have they done in the midst of Mine house. And furthermore they have sent for men coming from afar—unto them an ambassador was sent. And lo ! they came. For them thou didst wash thyself, paint thine eyes, and adorn thyself with thine ornaments. Thou didst sit upon a handsome couch with a table spread before it, whereupon thou hadst set Mine incense, and My oil ; and with a loud voice they sang therein, even unto men of the common sort, drunkards

brought from the wilderness, who put bracelets upon their hands, and beautiful crowns upon their heads. Then said I: 'She that is old in unfaithfulness will be unfaithful, they with her and she with them.' And they came to her, as they come to unfaithful women; thus they came to Oholah, and Oholibah, the unfaithful ones.

The general conclusion.

And righteous men—they shall judge them as they judge those that are unfaithful, and that shed blood; for they are unfaithful, and bloodguilty. For thus saith Jehovah:—

I will bring up many against them, and give them to be maltreated and robbed.

They shall stone them with stones, and slay them with swords;

They shall kill their sons and daughters, and burn their houses.

Thus will I cause unfaithfulness to cease out of the land.

That all women may learn not to do as you did.

They shall bring your unfaithfulness upon you! Ye shall suffer for your idolatries!

Yea, ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

(Ch. xxiii. 36-49.)

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE EVE OF JERUSALEM'S FALL (588 B.C.).

The date. Fast in commemoration of Siege begun.

And the Word of Jehovah came unto me in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month (Tammuz) saying:—

Child of man! Write thee the name of the day, this

very day ; for on this same day the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem ; and utter a parable unto the House of rebellion, and say unto them, Thus saith Jehovah :—

Set on the pot, set it on ! Pour water into it ;

Gather the pieces for it, every good piece, the thigh and shoulder ;

Fill it with the choice bones.

Take the choice of the flock, a pile also of wood under it,

Make it boil well, and let the bones in it be seethed.

The Parable explained.

Therefore thus saith Jehovah :—

Woe to the guilty city ! To the pot with its rust in it !

The rust of which is not gone out of it.

Bring it out piece by piece ; no lot is cast upon it.

The blood she hath shed is in her midst ; she put it on a bare rock.

She poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust.

That it might cause fury to come up to avenge it,

I have set her blood on a bare rock, that it might not be hid.

Therefore saith Jehovah :—

Woe to the guilty city ! I will even make the pile for fire great !

Heap on wood ! Kindle the fire ! Dress the flesh !

Boil the broth well ! And let the bones be burnt !

Then set it empty on the coals, that the brass may be hot, and burn ;

That the uncleanness of it may be melted, that its rust may be consumed.

(She hath wearied Me with toil.)

Her great rust hath not come out of her ; let it be in the
fire,
For the uncleanness of thy infidelity.
Since thou wast not cleansed from thy sin, when I purged
thee,
Thou shalt not be purged any more, till I have poured out
My fury upon thee.
I Jehovah have spoken ! It shall be ! I will perform it !
I will not go back, neither will I spare, nor repent.
According to thy ways and thy doings shall I judge thee ;
saith Jehovah. (Ch. xxiv. 1-14.)

The Prophet's great bereavement. A type.

The Word of Jehovah also came unto me, saying :—

Child of man ! Behold I take away from thee the desire of
thy eyes with a stroke, yet thou shalt not mourn, neither shalt
thou weep, nor cry. Sigh in silence, make no mourning for
the dead. Put on thy head-dress, and thy sandals on thy
feet ; cover not the lower part of thy face, and eat not the
bread of mourning.

So I spake unto the people in the morning, and at even
my wife died. And I did in the morning as I was com-
manded.

A reason asked and given.

Then the people said unto me, "Wilt thou not tell us
what these things are for us, that thou doest ?"

Then I answered them, "The Word of Jehovah came unto
me, saying : Speak unto the House of Israel, Thus saith
Jehovah :—

Behold ! I will profane My Holy place, your boasted
stronghold !

The desire of your eyes, and that for which your soul longeth !

And your sons, and your daughters, whom ye have left
shall fall by the sword.

And ye shall do as I have done ;

Ye shall not cover your chin, nor eat the bread of mourning.

Your head-dress shall be on, and your sandals on your foot ;

Ye shall not mourn, nor weep ; but ye shall pine away

For your iniquities, and moan one toward another.

Thus Ezekiel shall be unto you a sign ; as he hath done so
do ye ;

And when this cometh, ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

The prophetic silence.

And thou Child of man ! Is it not so ? In the day when I
take from them their stronghold, the joy of their glory, the
desire of their eyes, and that on which they set their hearts,
they their sons and daughters, he that escapeth in that day
shall come unto thee to cause thee to hear it thyself—in
that day, shall thy mouth be opened to him that escapeth,
and thou shalt speak and be no more dumb, and thou shalt
be a sign unto them, and they shall know that I am
Jehovah.

(Ch. xxiv. 15-27.)

THE BOOK OF ORACLES AGAINST THE NATIONS.

CHAPTERS XXV-XXXII. (587 B.C.).

(1) Concerning Ammon.

And the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying :

Child of man ! Set thy face against the Children of
Ammon and prophesy against them, and say unto the
Ammonites, Hear the Word of Jehovah :—Thus saith
Jehovah.

Because thou saidst Aha ! against My Holy place, when it
was profaned ;

And against the land of Israel, when it was made desolate ;
And against the House of Judah, when they went into
captivity,

Behold ! I will for this give thee to the men of the East
for a possession,

They shall set their palaces in thee, and pitch their camp
in thee,

They shall eat thy fruit, and drink thy milk ;

I will make Rabbah a pasture for camels ;

The Children of Ammon a couching place for flocks ;

And ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

For thus saith Jehovah :—

Because thou hast clapped thy hands, and stamped thy feet,
And rejoiced in heart with all thy hate against the land of
Israel,

Behold ! therefore I will stretch out My hand upon thee,

I will give thee up for a possession to the peoples ;

I will cut thee off from the peoples : I will destroy thee out
of the countries.

I will destroy thee. And thou shalt know that I am
Jehovah !

(Ch. xxv. 1-7.)

(2) Concerning Moab.

Thus saith Jehovah :—

Because **Moab** is saying, “Lo ! the House of Judah is
like unto all the nations,”

Therefore, behold ! I will expose Moab, that his cities be
no more,

Even the cities on his frontiers, the glory of the country,

Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon, and Kiriathaim,

Together with the Ammonites unto the men of the East.

I will give them for a possession, that the Ammonites may

Not be remembered among the nations.

I will also execute judgment on Moab; and they shall know that I am Jehovah. (Ch. xxv. 8-11.)

(3) Concerning Edom.

Thus saith Jehovah :—

Because Edom hath dealt against the House of Judah by way of revenge

And hath wronged them beyond measure, in revenging himself upon them,

Therefore thus saith Jehovah :—

I also will stretch out Mine hand upon Edom, cutting off man and beast ;

I will make it desolate from **Teman** unto Dedan ; by the sword shall they fall.

I will revenge Edom by the hand of My people Israel,
They shall treat Edom according to My anger and fury,
And they shall know My vengeance, saith Jehovah.

(4) Concerning the Philistines.

Thus saith Jehovah :—

Because the Philistines have dealt in a spirit of revenge ;
And have taken vengeance with deliberate malice,
To destroy with perpetual hatred.

Therefore thus saith Jehovah :—

Behold ! I will stretch out My hand upon the Philistines,
I will cut off the **Cherethites**, and destroy all that dwell by the sea,

Yea, I will execute great vengeance upon them (with furious rebukes*),

And they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I lay My vengeance upon them. (Ch. xxv. 12-17.)

* From Ch. v. 15, p. 21.

(5) **Against Egypt.** (Ch. xxix.—xxxii.).

The time.

In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the twelfth day of the month the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying :—

The oracle against Pharaoh.

Child of man ! Set thy face against the Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and prophesy against him and against all Egypt.

Speak and say, Thus saith Jehovah :

Behold ! I am against thee, Pharaoh, king of Egypt,

Thou great **crocodile**, which lieth in the midst of its streams !

That saith, My **Nile** is my own, and I have made it for myself.

But I will put hooks in thy jaws, the fish of thy Nile I will cause to stick to thy scales,

Yea, I will take thee out of thy Nile, and all its fish shall stick to thy scales.

And I will cast thee down in the wilderness, thee, and all thy Nile fish.

Thou shalt fall upon the open fields, thou shalt not be brought together, nor buried.

I have given thee for meat to the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air,

And all that dwell in Egypt shall know that I am Jehovah.

For they have been as a staff of reed unto the House of Israel.

When they take hold of thee with the hand, thou dost break, and tear their hand ;

When they lean on thee thou dost break, and make their
loins to shake.

Therefore thus saith Jehovah :

Behold ! I will bring a sword upon thee, and cut off from
thee man and beast,

And the land of Egypt shall be desolate and waste,

And they shall know that I am Jehovah,

Because he has said, The Nile is mine, and I have made it.

Behold ! I am against thee, and against thy Nile streams,

And I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste—a desola-
tion !

From **Migdol** unto **Syene**—and up to the border of **Ethiopia**.

Neither foot of man, nor foot of beast shall pass through it.

It shall not be inhabited for **forty** years.

Yea, I will make the land of Egypt desolate, in the midst
of desolate lands,

Her towns in the midst of desolate towns shall be desolate
for forty years ;

I will scatter Egypt among the nations, and disperse them
among the lands. (Ch. xxix. 1-12.)

A promise for the future.

For thus saith Jehovah :—At the end of forty years

I will gather Egypt from the peoples whither they were
scattered.

I will change their fortune, and bring them again to the
land of **Pathros**,

To their native land, but they shall be a lowly kingdom.

It shall be the weakest of kingdoms ; it shall no more
exalt itself over the nations ;

For I will bring it down, that so it shall no more rule the
nations,

No more shall it be a support to the House of Israel,
But a reminder of sin when they look towards them.
And they shall know that I am Jehovah.

(Ch. xxix. 13-16.)

The day of the Lord against Egypt.

The Word of Jehovah came again unto me, saying :—
Child of man ! Prophecy, and say, Thus saith Jehovah :
Howl ye ! Alas the day !
The day is near ! The day for Jehovah is near !
A day of clouds ! It is the time of the nations !
A sword cometh upon Egypt—great anguish on Ethiopia !
When the slain shall fall in Egypt !
They shall take away her wealth, and her foundations shall
be destroyed !

Ethiopia, and **Phut**, and **Lydia**, and the **Border** tribes,
Libya, and all the men of the land of **Crete**—
They shall all together fall by the sword.

Thus saith Jehovah :—

They also that uphold Egypt shall fall ! The pride of its
might shall sink :

From Migdol to Syene shall they fall in it by the sword ;
saith Jehovah.

And she shall be desolate in the midst of desolate lands—
Her towns shall be in the midst of desolate towns.

They shall know that I am Jehovah,
When I bring a fire into Egypt, and all her helpers are
destroyed.

In that day shall messengers go forth from before Me in
ships,

To terrify self-confident Ethiopia !

Great pains shall come upon them in that day ! Lo ! It
cometh !

Thus saith Jehovah :—

I will put an end to the noise of Egypt by the hand of
Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon,

He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations—

They shall be brought to destroy the land ;

They shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the
land with the dead.

I will dry up the Nile-streams, and sell the land into the
hand of the wicked ;

I will make the land waste, and all that is therein,

By the hand of strangers ; I, Jehovah, have spoken.

Thus saith Jehovah :—

I will also destroy the idols, and cause their false gods
in **Noph** to end,

And there shall no more be a prince of the land of
Egypt ;

I will put a terror upon the land of Egypt.

Yea, I lay Pathros desolate, and bring fire into **Zoan**,

And execute judgments in **No-Amon**.

I will pour My fury upon **Pelusium**, the stronghold of
Egypt ;

And I will cut off the multitude of Noph,

I will put fire in Egypt ! Pelusium shall have great pain !

No shall be rent asunder, and Noph—enemies by day !

The young men of **On**, and **Bubastis** shall fall by the sword ;

And these towns shall go into captivity.

At **Tahpanhes** also the day shall be darkened, when I break
them.

The yokes of Egypt—the pomp of her strength shall cease
in her.

As for her, a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall
go into captivity.

Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt—
And they shall know that I am Jehovah.

(Ch. xxx. 1-19.)

PROPHECIES OF THE SEVENTH YEAR.

The complete overthrow of Pharaoh (586 B.C.).

And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first month, on the seventh day of the month that the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying :—

Child of man ! I have broken the arm of Pharaoh, king of Egypt,

And lo ! it shall no more be bound up that remedies may be applied,

That a bandage may be put on it to strengthen it to hold the sword.

Therefore, thus saith Jehovah :

Behold ! I am against Pharaoh, king of Egypt ! I will break both his arms—

The sound one, and the broken one ; I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand.

I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them through the countries.

I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and put My sword in his hand.

But I will break Pharaoh's arms, and he shall groan before him,

With the groanings of one that is mortally wounded.

And I will uphold the arms of the king of Babylon, and the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down.

They shall know that I am Jehovah, when I put my sword

In the hand of the king of Babylon, and he stretches it upon
the land of Egypt.

Yea, I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and
disperse them among the countries,

And they shall know that I am Jehovah.

(Ch. xxx. 20-26.)

The fate of Egypt in an allegory.

And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third
month, on the first day of the month, that the Word of
Jehovah came unto me, saying :—

Child of man ! Speak unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and
say, Whom art thou like in thy greatness ?

A comparison.

Behold ! thou wast as a goodly cedar in Lebanon with fair
branches !

A shadowing foliage, with top of high stature, reaching unto
the clouds !

The waters nourished it, the deep made it grow.

It caused its streams to go about its plantation, and sent
out its little streams

Unto all the trees of the field.

Therefore its height was greater than all the trees of the
field ;

Its branches were many, and its boughs long.

Because of the abundance of water, when they sprung forth,

All the birds of the air made their nests in its boughs,

Under its branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth
their young ;

Yea, under its shade all great nations dwelt.

Thus fair was it in its greatness, in the length of its
branches,

For its root was by many waters.

Cedars in the garden of God could not hide it ;
The firs were not like its boughs, nor the planes like its
branches ;
Nor was any tree in the garden of God like it in beauty.
I made it fair by the abundance of its branches,
So that all the trees of Eden, the garden of God, envied it.
(Ch. xxxi. 1-9.)

A terrible fall : the felling of the cedar.

Therefore thus saith Jehovah :
Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height :
Because he has shot up his head unto the clouds,
And his head is lifted up in his height,
I will even deliver him into the hand of the mighty one of
the nations.
He shall fully deal with him. I have driven him out for
his wickedness.
Yea strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off
and left him.
Upon the mountains, and in all the valleys his branches
are fallen ;
And his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land ;
All the people of the earth have given up his shade, and
left him.
Upon his fallen trunk the birds of the air do sit,
All the beasts of the field do stand upon his branches.
That no trees by the river may exalt themselves by reason
of their height,
Nor shoot up their head unto the clouds ;
Nor trust in themselves in their pride as drinkers of water.
For they are all given up unto death, unto the pit,
In the midst of the children of men to those that go down
to the grave.

The impression caused by this event.

Thus saith Jehovah :

In the day when he went down to the grave, I made the deep to mourn for him ;

I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed ;

I caused Lebanon to mourn for him—all the trees of the field fainted ;

I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall,
When I cast him down to Sheol, with them that go down to the pit ;

And all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon—
All that drink up water did comfort themselves beneath the earth.

They also went down into Sheol with him, to those that were slain with the sword,

Even those that were his support, that dwelt under his protection among the nations.

Conclusion.

To whom art thou thus like in glory, and greatness among the trees of the garden ?

Yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the lower parts of the earth ! Thou shalt lie among the circumcised with those that be slain with the sword !

The application.

This is Pharaoh, and all his pomp ! saith Jehovah.

(Ch. xxxi. 10-18.)

PROPHECY OF THE EIGHTH YEAR (585 B.C.).

And it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, in the first day of the month, that the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying : Child of man ! Take up

a lamentation over Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and say unto him :—

Thou wast likened unto a young lion of the nations, and
a sea monster !

Thou didst break forth in thy streams ! Thou didst
trouble the waters

With thy feet ! Thou didst pollute their streams !

Thus saith Jehovah :

I will therefore spread out My net over thee, along with
many peoples,

Yea, I will bring thee up in My net.

And I will leave thee upon the land—I will cast thee upon
the field ;

I will cause all the birds of the air to remain upon thee ;

I will fill the beasts of the whole earth with thee.

I will lay thy flesh on the hills, thy remains in the valleys.

I will also water the earth with the outflow of thy blood

Up to the hills, and the river shall be full of thee.

When I make an end of thee, I will cover the sky and
darken the stars,

I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not
shine.

All the bright lights of the sky will I make dark over thee ;

I will set darkness upon the earth, saith Jehovah.

I will also dismay the hearts of many peoples, when I
destroy thee,

Among nations, unto countries which thou hast not known.

Yea, I will make many peoples amazed, and their kings in
great terror,

When I shall brandish My sword before them

They shall tremble continually, every man for his life, in
the day of thy fall.

(Ch. xxxii. 1-10.)

For thus saith Jehovah :—

The sword of the king of Babylon cometh upon thee !
 By the swords of the mighty will I cause thy noise to cease,
 By the terrible of the nations, all of them ;
 They will lay waste the pomp of Egypt—all its noise shall
 end !

I will also destroy all its beasts from beside the great waters ;
 Neither shall foot of man, nor hoof of beast disturb them
 any more.

Then will I cause their waters to settle, and their streams to
 flow like oil, saith Jehovah.

When I make the land of Egypt desolate, and the country
 empty of its fulness,

When I smite all that dwell there, they shall know that I
 am Jehovah.

This is the lamentation wherewith they shall lament her.
 The daughters of the nations shall lament her ; they shall
 lament for her, even for Egypt, and for all her glory, saith
 Jehovah.

(Ch. xxxii. 11-16.)

The lamentation over Egypt. A funeral dirge (585 B.C.).

It came to pass also in the twelfth year, on the fifteenth
 day of the (twelfth) month, that the Word of Jehovah came
 unto me :—

Child of man ! Wail for the glory of Egypt, and hurl it down,
 Thou and the daughters of the glorious nations,—down to
 Sheol,

With them that are gone down into the pit.

Which of them dost thou surpass in fortune ?

Go down, and be laid with the uncircumcised !

In the midst of them that fall by the sword they shall fall !

The sword is unsheathed ! Draw her and all her glory down ;

The great chieftains shall speak about her out of the midst
 of Sheol ;

With those that helped her, they have gone down,
They lie disgraced, slain by the sword.

Assyria's fate.

Asshur is there, and all her peoples! Her graves are
around her!

All of them are slain, they have fallen by the sword!
Their graves are in the depths of the pit—all her peoples
are buried around her,
All of them are slain, fallen by the sword, who caused
terror on the earth.

The fate also of Elam.

Elam is there! All her people round her grave—all of them
slain,
Fallen by the sword, gone down dishonoured to the depths
of the earth,
Those who caused terror on the earth!
They also have borne their shame along with those that are
gone down to the pit!
They have given them a bed in the midst of the slain, with
all their peoples,
Their graves are around—all of them dishonoured, slain by
the sword!
Though they once caused terror while alive, they also are
disgraced with those that go down to the pit!
They are put in the midst of them that are slain.

Other nations.

There are **Meshech-Tubal**, and all their people—their
graves around them,
All of them disgraced, slain by the sword;

For they once caused terror while alive !
But they lie not with the mighty, that are fallen of old !
Who are gone down to Sheol, with their weapons of war !
Whose swords are laid under their heads !
And whose iniquities were laid upon their bones !
Because the terror of their might was on the earth !
Thou also shalt lie among the disgraced, with their slain by
the sword !

The fate of Edom and Zidon.

There is Edom ! Her kings, and all her princes—
Who because of their might lie with those that were slain by
the sword !
They lie with the disgraced, with those that are gone down
to the pit !
There are the princes of the North, all of them, and all
Zidon—gone down with the slain !
Because of the terror of their might (they are ashamed).
They lie in disgrace with them that are slain with the sword,
And bear shame with them that are gone down into the pit.

The concluding application.

Pharaoh shall see these, and shall be consoled over all his
people slain by the sword ;
Even Pharaoh, and all his army, saith Jehovah ;
For he has caused his terror to be felt on the earth
And he shall be laid in the midst of the disgraced—slain by
the sword,
Even Pharaoh, and all his people, saith Jehovah.

(Ch. xxxii. 1-32.)

PROPHECY OF THE SEVENTH YEAR (586 B.C.).

PART I.

(5) Concerning Tyre.

The time.

And it came to pass in the eleventh year, on the first day of the **sixth** month, that the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying :—

The Oracle.

Child of man ! Because Tyre saith against Jerusalem,
Ah ! she is broken—the gate of the peoples ! she is turned
unto me !

She, that was full, is laid waste.

Therefore thus saith Jehovah :

Behold ! I am against thee, O Tyre ! Against thee I will
bring

Many nations, as the sea bringeth up its waves !

They shall destroy the walls of Tyre ; they shall break down
her towers !

I will scrape her earth off her, and make her a naked rock ;
She shall be for the spreading of nets, in the midst of the sea,
For I have spoken, saith Jehovah ! She shall become a
spoil for the nations.

Her dependencies on the mainland shall be cut off by the
sword,

And they shall know that I am Jehovah.

For thus saith Jehovah :

Behold ! I bring against Tyre, Nebuchadrezzar, king of
Babylon,

The king of kings, from the north, with horses and chariots,
With horsemen, and companies, and much people.

Thy dependencies on the mainland, he shall cut off with
the sword ;

He shall set up a tower against thee, and build a rampart,
And place a wall of shields against thee.

Yea, he shall set battering rams against thy walls,
And with his swords he shall break down thy towers.

Because of his many horses, dust shall cover thee ;
At the noise of the horsemen, and wheels, and chariots
thy walls shall shake

As he enters thy gates, as men enter conquered towns.

With his horses' hoofs shall he tread down all thy streets.

Thy people shall he slay with the sword ; thy proud **pillars**
shall be cast down !

They shall seize all thy wealth, and take possession of thy
goods ;

They shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant
houses ;

They shall lay thy stones, timber, and dust in the water ;

And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease ;

The sound of thy harps shall no more be heard !

Yea, I will make thee a bare rock, a place for nets to be
spread on ;

Thou shalt be built no more ; for I Jehovah have spoken,
saith Jehovah. (Ch. xxv. 7-14.)

Astonishment at the fall of Tyre.

Thus saith Jehovah to Tyre :

Shall not the sea-coasts shake at the sound of thy fall,

When the wounded cry, and slaughter is made in thy midst?

All the princes of the sea shall come down from their
thrones,

They shall lay aside their robes, and put off their brodered
garments ;

They shall be clothed with trembling ; they shall sit on the ground ;

They shall tremble perpetually, and be astounded at thee !

Yea, they shall take up a lamentation over thee, and say to thee :—

“ How art thou destroyed from the sea, thou renowned city !
She that caused terror among all the sea coasts ! ”

Now shall the sea-coasts tremble, at the day of thy fall,

Yea, the sea-coasts shall be troubled at thy going down.

For thus saith Jehovah :—

When I make thee a desolate city, like those without inhabitant ;

When I bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters cover thee ;

Then I shall bring thee down to those that have gone into the pit,

Unto the people of former days—

I shall set thee in the lower parts of the earth,

Like places formerly desolated, that have gone into the pit,

So that thou shalt not be inhabited, nor be placed in the land of the living.

I will utterly destroy thee, so that thou shalt be no more ;

Though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again ; saith Jehovah. (Ch. xxvi. 15-21.)

The glory of Tyre described.

The Word of Jehovah came again unto me, saying :—

Now thou Child of man ! take up a lamentation for Tyre, and say unto Tyre :—

O thou that art situated at the harbours of the sea ;

Thou that art a merchant with the peoples unto many lands !

Thus saith Jehovah :—

O Tyre ! Thou hast said, I am perfect in beauty !
Thy borders are in the sea ; thy builders have made thee
beautiful.

They have made thy sides of cypresses from **Senir** ;
They have brought cedars from Lebanon to make thy
masts ;

Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars ;
Thy deck they made of ivory, inlaid in **sherbin** wood,
Brought from the isle of **Ohittim**.

Broidered linen from Egypt was thy sail, and thy flag ;
Purple and scarlet from **Ionian** coasts formed thy awning ;
The people of Zidon and Arvad were thy mariners ;
Thy skilled men, O Tyre, were thy pilots ;
The elders of **Gebal**, and their wise men were thy
carpenters ;

All the ships of the sea with their mariners were with thee
to trade,

They of Persia, Lud, and Phut were in thine army, as men
of war,

They hung the shield, and helmet in thee ; they gave thee
beauty.

The men of Arvad, and **Hethlon** were upon thy walls round
about ;

The **Zemarites** were in thy towers ;

They hung their shields upon thy walls around ; they com-
pleted thy beauty. (Ch. xxvii. 1-11.)

The market of Tyre.

Tarshish traded with thee, so great was the quantity of
goods ;

With silver, iron, tin, and lead they traded for thy wares.

Javan, Tubal, and Meshech,—they were thy customers ;
They sold slaves, and vessels of brass as thy wares.

They of the house of **Togarmah** traded for thy wares,
With horses, and horsemen, and mules.

The men of **Rhodes** were trading with thee ; many sea-
coasts .

Were thy customers. They brought thee in exchange bones
of ivory, and ebony.

Edom traded with thee ; so great was the variety of thy
goods !

They traded in thy fairs with emeralds, purple, and
broidered work,

With fine linen, and pearls, and agate.

Judah, and the land of Israel—they traded with thee,

They brought to thee wheat, and **spices**, and **comfits**,

Honey and oil and balm.

Damascus traded with thee, so great were the wares made
by thee,

So great was thy wealth, bringing the wine of **Helbon** and
the wool of **Zachar** ;

From **Uzal** they brought wrought iron into thy markets ;

Bright iron, cassia, and calamus were articles of trade ;

Dedan traded in precious cloths for saddles ;

Arabia, and all the chiefs of **Kedar**—they traded with thee

In lambs, and rams, and goats ; these they sold to thee.

Havilah, **Sheba**, and **Raamah** traded with thee ;

They brought to thy markets choice spices, precious stones,
and gold.

Haran, and **Calneh** and **Eden** traded with thee ;

Assyria herself learned from thee in trade.

These were thy customers in gorgeous fabrics, cloaks of
purple, and broidered work.

In treasures bound with cord, and durable, they traded with thee ;

The ships of Tarshish did supply thy markets.

Thou wast replenished, and made glorious in the sea.

The end of all this glory.

Thy rowers have brought thee forth into the deep sea ;

An east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the sea.

Thy wealth, and thy wares, and thy merchandise,

Thy sailors, and thy pilots, thy carpenters, and merchants,

Yea, all thy men of war in thee, even all that are with thee,

Shall fall into the depth of the sea, in the day of thy fall.

The waves shall quake at the cry of thy pilots.

All the rowers, sailors, and all the pilots of the sea

Shall come down from their ships, they shall stand on the land,

They shall raise their voice over thee, and cry bitterly,

They shall cast dust on their heads, and wallow in the ashes ;

They shall shave their heads, and gird themselves with sackcloth ;

They shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart, wailing bitterly ;

And in their wailing they shall take up over thee

A lamentation, and lament over thee, saying :—

“Who was like Tyre ? Glorious in the midst of the sea !

When thy wares were exported, many peoples were supplied.

By thy wealth, and wares thou didst enrich kings.

Now thou art destroyed off the seas ; into deep waters

Thy merchandise, and all thy people are fallen !

All the inhabitants of the coasts are astounded at thee !

Their kings are sore afraid, and sad in expression,

The merchants among the peoples cry out at thee ;
Thou art destroyed, and shalt never be any more.

(Ch. xxvii. 12-36.)

PART II.

The condemnation of the ruler of Tyre.

The Word of Jehovah came again unto me, saying :—
Child of man ! say unto the ruler of Tyre : Thus saith
Jehovah :

Because thine heart is lifted up and thou hast said, I am
a God !

I sit in a seat of God, in the midst of the seas ;

Yet thou art a man, and not a God,

Though thou set thine heart as the heart of God.

Lo ! Thou art wiser than **Daniel** ! No secret is hidden
from thee !

With thy wisdom, and understanding thou hast got wealth,

Yea thou hast brought silver and gold into thy treasures !

By the greatness of thy wisdom in thy trade hast thou
become rich,

And thine heart is lifted up by reason of thy riches !

Therefore thus saith Jehovah :—

Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God,

Behold therefore, I will bring strangers against thee—the
terrible ones of the nations !

And they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy
wisdom, and profane thy brightness.

They shall bring thee down to the pit,

And thou shalt die as those that are destroyed in the midst
of the seas.

Wilt thou say, “ I am a God,” in the presence of Him that
destroyeth thee ?

Nay, thou art a man, and not a God, in the hand of Him
that woundeth thee !

Thou shalt die as the uncircumcised, by the hand of
strangers,

For I have spoken, saith Jehovah. (Ch. xxviii. 1-10.)

The king's pride further denounced.

Again the Word of Jehovah came unto me :—

Child of man ! Take up a lamentation over the king of
Tyre, and say unto him, Thus saith Jehovah :

Thou wast perfect (full of wisdom) ! Perfect in beauty !

Thou wast in Eden, the garden of God !

Every precious stone was for thine adornment,

Ruby, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper,

Sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle (ligure, agate, and
amethyst),

And of gold was the workmanship of thy settings, and
grooves.

When thou wast made, thou wast with the overshadowing
cherub !

I set thee, and thou wast upon the holy mount of God ;

Thou didst walk up and down amid flashing stones !

Thou wast perfect in thy ways from thy creation,

Till iniquity was found in thee.

In the extent of thy trade, thou didst fill thyself with vio-
lence and didst sin !

Therefore have I cast thee as profane out of the mount of
God ;

And the cherub hath destroyed thee from the midst of
the flashing stones.

Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty.

Thou hast corrupted thy wisdom, and thy splendour,

I have cast thee down ; I have laid thee for kings to gaze at.
Thou hast profaned thy holiness, by the iniquity of thy trade.
Therefore I have brought thee to ashes in the sight of
every beholder.

All that know thee among the peoples shall be astonished
at thee.

Thou art destroyed, and shalt never be any more.

(Ch. xxviii. 11-19.)

Concerning Zidon.

The Word of Jehovah came again unto me, saying :—
Child of man ! Set thy face against Zidon, and prophesy
against it.

And say, Thus saith Jehovah :

Behold I am against thee, O Zidon !

I will get glory in thy midst, and they shall know that I
am Jehovah,

When I shall have executed judgments in her, and shown
Myself holy.

For I am sending into her plague, and death into her
streets,

And the wounded shall fall by the sword in her midst,
on every side ;

And they shall know that I am Jehovah.

(Ch. xxviii. 20-23.)

A final word concerning Tyre and Egypt (570 B.C.).

Now it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year,
in the first month, on the first day of the month, the Word
of Jehovah came unto me, saying :—

Child of man ! Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, has

caused his army to undertake a great siege against Tyre ; every head was made bald, and every shoulder was rubbed bare, yet he had no return for himself nor for his army in the siege which he had undertaken against Tyre. Therefore thus saith Jehovah :—Behold ! I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon, and he shall carry off her abundance, and take away her booty, and plunder her, and it shall be a return for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt as a return for the work he did against Tyre, because he wrought for Me, saith Jehovah. (Ch. xxix. 17-20.)

Israel after the Restoration.

And there shall be no more to the House of Israel a pricking brier,
Nor any grieving thorn of all around that despised them,
And they shall know that I am Jehovah.

Thus saith Jehovah :—

When I shall have gathered the House of Israel from the peoples whither they are scattered,
And shall have shown Myself holy in the sight of the heathen,

Then shall they dwell in the land that I have given to My servant Jacob.

Yea, they shall dwell with confidence in it ; they shall build houses and plant vineyards.

They shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments

Upon those around that despised them.

And they shall know that I am Jehovah.

(Ch. xxviii. 24-26.)

The prophet's vindication.

In that day will I cause the horn of the House of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee an open mouth in their midst; and they shall know that I am Jehovah.

(Ch. xxix. 21.)

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NEW FUTURE: THE CRISIS PAST: RESTORATION
BEGUN.**The date (586 B.C.).**

And it came to pass in the eleventh year of our captivity in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped from Jerusalem came unto me, saying, "The city is taken!"

(Ch. xxxiii. 21.)

The function of the prophet set forth.

And the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying:—Child of man! Speak unto the Children of thy people, and say unto them, 'When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their number, and set him for their watchman, and when he seeth the sword coming upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people, then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning—if the sword come and destroy him, he shall have himself to blame, for he heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; he shall be blameworthy. But he that gave the warning shall be free from blame. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned;—if the sword come, and take any one from among them,

he is taken away in his guilt, but the watchman will be held responsible for him.'

So thou, O Child of man! I have set thee for a watchman unto the House of Israel. Therefore, thou shalt hear the Word at My mouth, and warn them from Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man! Thou shalt surely die—if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his guilt, but I will hold thee responsible for him. But if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it—if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his guilt, but thou hast freed thyself from blame. Therefore, O thou Child of man! Speak unto the House of Israel:—Thus are ye saying: "Our transgressions, and our sins are upon us, and we waste away in them—how then can we live?" Say unto them. "Assuredly saith Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, nay rather in the wicked turning from his way, and living. Turn ye! Turn ye! from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O House of Israel? Say also, Child of man! unto the Children of thy people,—The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression. As for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby, when he turneth from his transgression; nor shall the righteous be enabled to live for his righteousness, when he sinneth. When I say to the righteous, that he shall surely live—if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteous deeds shall not be remembered, but for his iniquity which he hath committed he shall die. When, again, I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die—if he turn from his sin, and do that which is just and right:—if the wicked restore the pledge, restore what he has stolen,

walk in the statutes of life and commit no iniquity :—he shall surely live, he shall not die.

The justice of God.

Yet the Children of thy people say, The way of Jehovah is not just ! But they—their way is not just ! When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby. But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is just, and right, he shall live thereby. Yet ye say, The way of Jehovah is not just ! O House of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways. (Ch. xxxiii. 1-20.)

The prophet speaks again.

Now the Hand of Jehovah was upon me in the evening before he that had escaped had arrived, and had opened my mouth for his coming to me in the morning. Yea, my mouth was opened, and I was no more silent !

A message to the captives.

And the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying :—

“ Child of man ! Those that inhabit the deserted places of the land of Israel say, ‘ Abraham was only one, and he inherited the land, but we are many—the land is given to us for an inheritance.’ ”

Therefore say unto them, “ Thus saith Jehovah, ‘ Ye eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes to your idols, and shed blood—Shall ye possess the land ? Ye use the sword, ye work abomination, and commit adultery—Shall ye possess the land ? Say thou this unto them, ‘ Thus saith Jehovah, Assuredly they that are in the deserted places shall fall by the sword, and him that is in the open field will I give to the

beasts to be devoured, and they that be in the forts, and in the caves shall die of the pestilence. For I will make the land most desolate, and the pomp of her strength shall cease, and the mountains of Israel shall be so desolate, that none shall pass through them. Then shall they know that I am Jehovah, when I shall have made the land most desolate because of all the abominations, which they have committed.

(Ch. xxxiii. 22-29.)

The prophet again an object of interest.

And as for thee, Child of man ! the Children of thy people are talking about thee by the walls, and in the doors of the houses, and speak every one to his neighbour, saying, 'Come I pray you and hear what is the Word that cometh forth from Jehovah.'

And they come unto thee as is the wont of the people, and they sit before thee, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them ; for falsehood is in their mouth, and their heart is set on covetousness. And lo ! thou art unto them a very lovely song—one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument, for they hear thy words, but they do them not. But when it cometh to pass (lo ! it will come), then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.

(Ch. xxxiii. 30-33.)

THE TRUE SHEPHERD-KING OF ISRAEL.

The wicked shepherd.

And the Word of Jehovah came unto me saying :—

Child of man ! Prophesy against the Shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith Jehovah unto the Shepherds :

Woe be to the Shepherds of Israel ! That feed themselves !
Should not the Shepherds feed the flock ?

Ye drink the milk, and ye clothe you with the wool !

Ye kill the fed ones ! Ye feed not the flock !

The weakly ones, ye have not strengthened ; the sickly, not
healed !

The wounded ye have not bound up !

Ye have not brought back the scattered ones, nor sought
the lost !

That which was strong ye have ruled over with rigour.

Yea, My sheep were without a shepherd !

They became meat to all the beasts of the field, and were
scattered !

My sheep wandered among all the mountains, and on
every hill,

Yea, My flock was scattered all over the earth !

And there was no one to search them out, or seek for them.

(Ch. xxxiv. 1-6.)

A divine interposition.

Therefore ye Shepherds ! hear the Word of Jehovah.

Assuredly, saith Jehovah, since My flock has become a spoil,

Since My flock has become meat to every beast of the field,

Because there was no Shepherd, and My Shepherds searched
not for My flock,

But the Shepherds fed themselves, and fed not My flock—

Therefore, O ye Shepherds, hear the Word of Jehovah :

Thus saith Jehovah. Behold ! I am against the Shepherds !

I will require My flock from them, and end their shepherding !

The Shepherds shall no more feed themselves,

For I will deliver My flock from their mouth, from being
meat for them.

For thus saith Jehovah :

Behold ! I, I Myself will both search out My sheep, and find them.

As a shepherd seeketh out his flock, when he is among his scattered sheep,

So will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all the places

Where they have been scattered, in the cloudy and dark day,
Yea, I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the lands ;

I will bring them to their own land, and feed them on the hills of Israel,

By the rivers, and in all the habitable places of the land.

I will feed them in a good pasture ; upon the high hills of Israel shall be their fold !

There they shall lie in a good fold ; in a fat pasture shall they feed

Upon the hills of Israel.

I will feed My flock ; yea, I will cause them to lie down, saith Jehovah.

I will seek what was lost ; restore what was driven away ;

Bind up what was wounded ; strengthen what was sick ;

I will keep the fat and strong ; I will feed them in justice.

(Ch. xxxiv. 7-16.)

A word to the people and their leaders.

And you O My flock, thus saith Jehovah : Behold ! I will judge

Between sheep, and sheep, between rams, and he-goats.

Is it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture,

That ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures ?

To have drunk of the clear waters, that ye must foul the
rest with your feet ?

Therefore thus saith Jehovah unto them :

Behold ! I Myself will judge between the fat, and the lean
sheep !

Since ye have thrust with side and shoulder, and pushed
all the diseased

With your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad.

Therefore I will save My flock—they shall be no more a
prey ;

Yea, I will judge between sheep and sheep.

The new king of the Restoration.

And I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall
feed them,

My servant David ; he shall feed them, and be their
Shepherd.

And I Jehovah will be their God, and My servant David
a prince among them.

I, Jehovah, have spoken.

I will make with them a covenant of peace ;

I will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land ;

And they shall dwell safely in the Wilderness, and sleep
in the woods.

Yea, I will set them round about My Hill,

And I will cause the rain to come down in its season,

There shall be showers causing blessing ;

The tree of the field shall yield its fruit ; the earth her
increase.

And they shall be safe in the land, and know that I am
Jehovah

When I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them

Out of the hand of those that served themselves of them.

And no more shall they be a prey to the nations, the beast of the field shall not devour them.

But they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid,

And I shall cause their planting to be famous ;

They shall no more be destroyed by hunger, nor taunted by the nations.

Thus shall they know that I Jehovah am their God.

And that they, the House of Israel, are My people, saith Jehovah.

And that ye are My flock, the flock of My pasture,

And that I am your God, saith Jehovah.

(Ch. xxxiv. 17-31.)

The condemnation of Edom.

And the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying :—

Child of man ! Set thy face against **Mount Seir**, and prophesy against it,

And say unto it, Thus saith Jehovah :

Behold ! Mount Seir, I am against thee ! I stretch out My hand against thee !

And I will make thee an utter desolation !

I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate !

And thou shalt know that I am Jehovah.

Because from of old thou hast had hatred,

And didst deliver the Children of Israel over to the sword,

In the time of their trouble, the time of the iniquity of the end.

Therefore assuredly saith Jehovah,

Thou art guilty in blood, and blood shall pursue thee ;

Since thou hast not hated blood, blood shall pursue thee.

Thus will I make Mount Seir an utter desolation !

I will cut off from it him that passeth out, and him that returneth.

And I will fill its mountains with its slain—in hill and valley.

Yea, in all thy rivers shall they fall, that are slain with the sword.

I will make thee a ruin for ever—thy towns shall not be dwelt in !

And ye shall know that I am Jehovah !

Punishment of boasting.

Because thou hast said, "These two nations, and these two countries are ours, and we will possess them, though Jehovah was there."

Therefore assuredly saith Jehovah :

I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy

Which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them,

And I will make Myself known in thee, when I judge thee.

Yea, thou shalt know that I am Jehovah !

I have heard all the blasphemies, which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying :—

"They are laid desolate ! They are given to us for destruction." Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against Me, and ye have multiplied your words against Me ; I have heard them.

Thus saith Jehovah :

When the whole land rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate !
As thou didst rejoice over the inheritance of Israel in its
desolation,
So will I do unto thee,—Thou shalt be desolate Mount
Seir !
Yea, all Edom entirely ; and they shall know that I am
Jehovah ! (Ch. xxxv. 1-15.)

A word of comfort to Israel.

Also, thou Child of man ! Prophecy unto the mountains
of Israel and say :—Ye Mountains of Israel, hear the Word
of Jehovah !

Thus saith Jehovah :

Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha ! Even
the ancient high hills are ours in possession ! Therefore
prophecy and say, Thus saith Jehovah :

Because, because they have made you desolate, and
swallowed you up on every side

That ye might be a possession unto those of the nations
that remain,

And are talked about, and made the gossip of the people ;
Therefore, ye Mountains of Israel, hear the Word of
Jehovah !

Thus saith Jehovah to the mountains, and to the hills,
and to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes,
and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey,
and a derision to those of the nations that remain round
about.

Therefore thus saith Jehovah :

Surely in My burning jealousy have I spoken against the
nations that remain ;

Against all Edom, which have appointed My land to be
theirs,
With heartfelt joy, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for
a prey ;

Prophesy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and
say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers and
to the valleys, Thus saith Jehovah :—

Behold ! I have spoken in My jealousy, and in My fury,
Because ye have borne the shame of the nations,
Therefore thus saith Jehovah : I have made an oath !
Assuredly the nations round about you shall bear their
shame ! (Ch. xxxvi. 1-7.)

The brightness of restoration.

And ye, O mountains of Israel, shall shoot forth your
branches,
And yield your fruit to My people Israel—for they are
coming soon.

For behold ! I am for you, and I will turn unto you,
And ye shall be tilled, and sown ;
I will multiply you, even all the House of Israel ;
The towns shall be inhabited, and the ruins built !
I will multiply man and beast ; they shall increase, and be
fruitful.

Yea, I will settle you as in the former days ;
Nay, I will do better than in your early days,
And ye shall know that I am Jehovah.
I will cause men, even My people Israel to walk on you,
And they shall possess you, and you shall be their inherit-
ance,

And you shall no more henceforth make them childless !

Thus saith Jehovah : Because they say unto you
Thou devourest men, and hast made thy nation childless,
Therefore thou shalt devour men no more, nor make thy
nation childless any more,

Saith Jehovah.

I will not let men bear in thee the shame of the nations
any more,

Thou shalt no more bear the reproach of the peoples any
more,

Nor shalt thou any more make thy nation to stumble, saith
Jehovah. (Ch. xxxvi. 8-15.)

A retrospect, with its warning.

Moreover the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying :—

Child of man ! When the House of Israel dwelt in their own land, they polluted it by their own way, and their own doings—their way was in My sight as great uncleanness. Wherefore I poured out My fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols, wherewith they had polluted it ; and I scattered them among the nations and they were dispersed through the countries—according to their way, and according to their doings I judged them. But when they came among the nations, whither they went, they profaned My holy Name, when it was said of them : ‘These are the people of Jehovah, and they are gone forth out of His land.’ Then I had concern for My holy Name, which the House of Israel had profaned among the nations, whither they had gone.

The reason of the divine vindication.

Therefore say unto the House of Israel, Thus saith Jehovah :

I do not this for your sakes, O House of Israel, but for My
own holy Name's sake,
Which ye have profaned among the nations, whither ye went.
Yea, I will vindicate My great Name, which was profaned
among the nations,
Which ye have profaned in the midst of them.
Then the nations shall know that I am Jehovah, saith
Jehovah,
When I shall be vindicated in you before their eyes ;
For I will take you from among the nations,
I will gather you out of all countries,
And I will bring you into your own land.

(Ch. xxxvi. 16-24.)

Blessing after restoration.

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be
clean !
From all your uncleanness, and from all your idols, will I
cleanse you.
A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put
within you.
I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh,
And I will give you a heart of flesh.
Yea, I will put My Spirit within you, and I will bring it
about
That ye shall walk in My statutes,
And ye shall keep My judgments, and do them.
And ye shall dwell in the land, that I gave your fathers ;
Ye shall be a people for Me, and I will be a God for you.
I will also purify you from all your uncleanness.
I will call for the corn, and increase it, and lay no famine
upon you,

Yea, I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field,

That ye be no more reproached among the heathen for famine.

Then ye shall remember your evil ways, and your wicked doings,

And loathe yourselves in your own sight for your sins and transgressions.

Not for your sakes do I this, saith Jehovah, be it known unto you,

Be ashamed, and confounded for your own ways, O House of Israel !

Thus saith Jehovah :

When I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt,

And the desolated land shall be tilled,

Instead of lying waste in the sight of every passer-by.

And they shall say,

This land that was desolated is become like the garden of Eden,

And the wasted, desolated, and ruined towns are fortified, and inhabited,

Then the nations that are left round about you shall know

That I, Jehovah, build the ruins, and plant the desolated places,

I, Jehovah, have spoken, and I will perform.

Thus saith Jehovah :

I will have Myself enquired of by the House of Israel to do this for them ;

I will increase them with men, as a flock,

As the flock for sacrifice, as the flock of Jerusalem in her feasts ;
 So shall the wasted towns be filled with flocks—even with men,
 And they shall know that I am Jehovah.
 (Ch. xxxvi. 25-38).

CHAPTER IX.

THREE GREAT DOCTRINES ILLUSTRATED—REVIVAL, REUNION, CONQUEST.

(1) **The revivification of a dead nation.**

The Hand of Jehovah was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of Jehovah, and set me down in the midst of the valley, and it was full of bones. Then He caused me to pass round about them, and behold ! there were very many on the surface of the valley, and lo ! they were very dry.

And He said unto me :—" Child of man ! Can these bones live ? "

And I answered, " O Jehovah ! Thou knowest. "

Again He said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, ' O ye dry bones, hear the Word of Jehovah ! Thus saith Jehovah unto these bones : Behold ! I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live, and I will lay sinews upon you, and bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and ye shall live, and ye shall know that I am Jehovah. '

So I prophesied, as I was commanded ; and as I prophesied there was a noise, and behold ! a shaking, and the bones came together bone to his bone ; and when I

beheld, lo ! the sinews, and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above, but there was no breath in them.

Then said He unto me : “ Prophecy unto the breath, prophesy, Child of man, and say unto the breath, Thus saith Jehovah, ‘ Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain that they may live.’ ” So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

The explanation of the allegory.

Then He said unto me, Child of man ! These bones are the whole House of Israel. Behold ! they say,—“ Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost ; as for us, we are cut off ! ”

Therefore prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith Jehovah : Behold ! O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then ye shall know that I am Jehovah when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up out of your graves, and have put My Spirit in you, so that ye shall live, and I shall have placed you in your own land ; then shall ye know that I, Jehovah, have spoken, and performed, saith Jehovah.

(Ch. xxxvii. 1-14.)

(2) The reunion of the Tribes.

The Word of Jehovah came again unto me, saying : ‘ Moreover thou, Child of man ! take thee one rod, and write upon it, *For Judah, and for the Children of Israel that belong to her.* Then take another rod, and write upon

it, *For Joseph, the rod of Ephraim, and for all the House of Israel that belong to them.* And join them one to another so as to form one rod, and they shall become one in thine hand.'

The symbol explained.

And when the Children of thy people shall speak unto thee saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these?

Say unto them, Thus saith Jehovah, Behold ! I will take the rod of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the Tribes of Israel that belong to them, and which I have put on it and the rod of Judah, and I will make them one rod, and they shall be one in **My** hand. And the rods whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes.

(Ch. xxxvii. 15-20.)

The re-gathering of the Tribes.

Say also unto them, Thus saith Jehovah, Behold ! I will take the Children of Israel from among the nations, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land, and I will make them one kingdom in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall rule over them all. They shall no more be two peoples, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions ; but I will save them from all their backslidings, wherein they have sinned, and I will cleanse them. Thus shall they be a people for Me, and I will be a God for them. And My servant David shall be

king over them, and they all shall have one shepherd. They shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes, and do them ; yea, they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob, My servant, wherein your fathers dwelt, and they shall dwell therein, they and their children and their children's children for evermore, and My servant David shall be their prince for evermore. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them—it shall be a covenant for evermore with them. For I will establish them, and multiply them, and set My Sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. And My dwelling-place shall be with them, and I will be a God to them, and they will be a people to Me. Yea, the nations shall know that I Jehovah do sanctify Israel, when My Sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore. (Ch. xxxvii. 21-28).

The conclusion.

And the nations shall know that the House of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity. Because they trespassed against Me, therefore I hid My face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies ; so fell they all by the sword. According to their uncleanness, and according to their transgressions I did unto them, and hid My face from them. Therefore thus saith Jehovah : Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole House of Israel, and will be jealous for My Holy Name. And they shall forget their shame, and all the trespasses, whereby they have trespassed against Me, when they shall dwell with confidence in their own land, and none shall make them afraid. When I have brought them again from the peoples, and gathered them out of the lands

of their enemies, and have shown Myself to be holy in them in the sight of many nations, then shall they know that I am Jehovah their God, in that I caused them to be led into captivity among the nations, and will gather them into their own land, and leave none of them there. And I will no more hide My face from them, after that I have poured out My Spirit upon the House of Israel, saith Jehovah.

(Ch. xxxix. 23-29.)

(3) The final overthrow of all enemies of God's people.

The invasion.

Now the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying : Child of man ! Set thy face against **Gog**, the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him and say, Thus saith Jehovah, Behold ! I am against thee, O **Gog**, thou prince of **Rosh**, Meshech and Tubal : I will lead thee about and put hooks in thy jaws, and bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses, and horsemen, all of them clothed in splendour, a great company with bucklers, and shields, all of them handling swords—Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them—all of them with shield and helmet ;—Gomer, and all his bands ; the house of Togarmah in the far north, and all his bands—many people with thee. Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou and all thy company, that are assembled unto thee, and be thou in reserve for Me.

(Ch. xxxviii. 1-7.)

The assembly of the invaders.

After many days thou shalt be called out ; at the end of the years thou shalt come again into the land that is at peace, and has been gathered out of many peoples,

against the mountains of Israel that have been so long wasted, but which has been brought forth out of the nations, and shall be dwelling with confidence all of them. Thou shalt come up against her like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many peoples with thee. Thus saith Jehovah : It shall also happen at the same time that things shall come into thy mind, and thou shalt purpose a mischievous plan, and say, I will go up against the land of unwalled villages, I will go up against them that are at rest, that dwell in confidence,

All of them dwelling without walls, and without bars or gates, To take great plunder, and to seize much prey, To turn mine hand upon the desolated places now inhabited,

And against the people gathered out of the nations Which have got cattle and goods, and dwell in the centre of the earth.

Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all traders thereof shall say unto thee :—

Art thou come to plunder ? Hast thou assembled to seize a prey ?

To carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods,

To take a great spoil ? (Ch. xxxviii. 1-13.)

The overthrow of the invaders.

Therefore, Child of man ! prophesy and say unto Gog :—

Thus saith Jehovah :

In that day when My people Israel dwelleth with confidence, Shalt thou not stir thyself up ?

And thou shalt come from thy place, out of the North,
Thou, and many peoples with thee, all of them on
horses,

A great company, and a mighty army,

Yea, thou shalt come up against My people Israel, as a
cloud to cover the land ;

It shall be in the end of the years, that I shall bring thee
against My land,

That the nations may know Me, when I shall be shown to
be holy,

In thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

Thus saith Jehovah :

Art thou not he of whom I have formerly spoken by My
servants, the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those
days for many years that I would bring thee against them ?
And it shall be in that day, in the day when Gog shall
come against the land of Israel, saith Jehovah, that My
fury shall come up in My face ; for in My jealousy, in My
fiery wrath have I spoken :

“Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the
land of Israel ;

The fishes of the sea, the birds of the air, the beasts of
the field,

All things that creep upon the earth, all men that are upon
the earth—

Shall shake at My presence, and the mountains shall be
thrown down,

Yea, the clefts shall fall,—every wall shall fall to the
ground.

I will call for a sword against him in all My mountains,
Saith Jehovah ;

Every man's sword shall be against his brother.

And I will contend against him with pestilence, and
blood

I will rain upon him, upon his bands, and the many peoples
with him—

An overflowing rain—great hailstones, fire, and brim-
stone.

Thus will I manifest My might, and My holiness,

I will be known before many nations ;

Yea, they shall know that I am Jehovah.

(Ch. xxxviii. 14-23.)

The overthrow in detail.

And thou, Child of man ! Prophecy against Gog, and say :—

Thus saith Jehovah :

Behold ! I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh,
Meshech and Tubal.

I will turn thee about, and lead thee on !

I will cause thee to come up from the utmost North,

And will bring thee against the mountains of Israel.

Then I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand,

And I will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right
hand.

Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel,

Thou, and all thy bands, and the peoples that are with
thee ;

I will give thee to ravenous birds of every kind,

And to the beasts of the field to devour thee.

Thou shalt fall upon the open field ; for I have spoken,

Saith Jehovah.

Yea, I will send a fire upon Magog,

And among them that dwell in confidence on the sea-
coasts,

And they shall know that I am Jehovah.
Thus will I make My holy Name known in the midst of
My people Israel,
I will not let them profane My holy Name any more,
And the nations shall know that I am Jehovah, the Holy
One in Israel.

The destruction of Gog.

Behold! It is come! It is done! Saith Jehovah;
This is the day, whereof I have spoken!
They that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth—
They shall set on fire, and burn the weapons, the
bucklers,
The bows and arrows, the staves and the spears,
And they shall burn them with fire seven years,
They shall take no wood from the field, nor cut any out
of the forests,
They shall make firewood of the weapons,
They shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those
that robbed them, saith Jehovah.
And it shall come to pass in that day that I will give
unto Gog,
A place for burial in Israel, the valley of **Abarim**, east of
the sea,
They shall close up the mouth of the valley!
There they shall bury Gog, and all his **multitude**,
And they shall call it—The valley of Gog's multitude!
For seven months shall the House of Israel be burying
them—to cleanse the land.
Yea, all the people of the land shall bury them.
And theirs shall be the triumph, when I am glorified,
Saith Jehovah.

And they shall sever out men continually to go through the
land, and search

For those that remain on the land, to cleanse it,
For the period of seven months shall they search.

And they that pass through the land shall pass through it,
And when any seeth a man's bone, then shall he set up a
sign by it,

Till the buriers have buried it in the valley of Gog's
multitude.

(And also the name of a city shall be 'Multitude.')

Thus shall they cleanse the land. (Ch. xxxix. 1-16.)

A great sacrificial feast.

And, thou, Child of man, thus saith Jehovah :

Speak unto every bird, and unto every beast of the field,
Assemble yourselves, and come ! Gather yourselves from
every side,

To My sacrifice that I do make for you, a great sacrifice on
the mountains of Israel.

That ye may eat flesh, and drink blood !

Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of
earth's princes,

Even of rams, lambs, goats, bullocks, all fed in **Bashan** !

And ye shall eat fat, till ye be full ; and drink blood till ye
be drunk,

In My sacrifice which I have made for you.

Yea, ye shall be satisfied at My table, with horses, and
horsemen,

With mighty men, and with all men of war, saith Jehovah.

And I will set My glory among the nations,

Yea, all the nations shall see My justice that I have carried
out,

And My hand that I have laid upon them.
And the House of Israel shall know that I am Jehovah
their God,
From that day henceforward. (Ch. xxxix. 17-22.)

CHAPTER X.

THE LAST VISION OF THE PROPHET. THE NEW TEMPLE AND THE ORDER OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

The date (572 B.C.).

In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was smitten—in that very day the Hand of Jehovah was upon me, and brought me thither.

The dimensions of the new Temple.

In the visions of God, He brought me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, on which was the form of a city over against me. And He brought me thither and behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like unto that of burning brass, with a flax line in his hand, and a measuring reed, and he stood in the gate-way. And the man said unto me, Child of man! Behold with thine eyes, and set thine heart upon all that I shall show thee; for thou hast been brought hither that I might show these things unto thee. Declare all thou seest to the House of Israel.

Verses 5-46.

(Then follows a description of the walls, and guardrooms of the new Temple about to be built in Jerusalem.)

He measured the court, an hundred cubits long, and hundred cubits broad, four square, and the altar that was before the House.

Chap. xl. 48—xli. 11 gives the measurements of the Temple-House, including the Porch, Holy Place, and Most Holy Place, with the side chambers.

Ten steps led up to the house (v. 49.) Round about the House were side chambers in three stories, thirty chambers in each story.

Chap. xli. 12-14. A separate building for general purposes.

Verses 15-26. The ornamentation of the House, and the altar of showbread.

Chap. xlii. Other buildings of the Inner court.

Then said he unto me, The north chambers, and the south chambers which are before the separate building are holy chambers, where the priests that approach unto Jehovah shall eat the most holy things; there shall they lay the most holy things, and the meal-offering, and the sin-offering, and the trespass-offering: for the place is holy. When the priests enter therein then shall they not go out of the Holy place into the outer court, but there they shall lay their garments, wherein they serve for they are holy; and they shall put on other garments, when they mix among the people. (vv. 13-14.)

Chap. xlii. 19-24—giving a description of the Temple kitchens—may come in here.

After he brought me through the entry, which was at the side of the gate, into the holy chambers of the priests, which looked toward the north, and behold! there was a place on the two sides westward. Then said he unto me, This is the place where the priests shall boil the

Ar trespass-offering and the sin-offering, where they shall bake
A the meal-offering, that they carry them not out into the
outer court to sanctify the people.

Chap. xlii. 20. He measured it on the four sides; it had a wall round about five hundred cubits long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between that which was holy, and that which was common.

The consecration of the House.

Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east; and behold! the Glory of Jehovah, the God of Israel, came from the direction of the East, and its noise was like the noise of many waters, and the land shone with its glory. And the appearance, which I saw, was like the appearance that I saw when it came to destroy the city and like the appearance that I saw by the river Chabor, and I fell upon my face. And the Glory of Jehovah came into the House by the way of the gate, that looketh toward the east. Then the Spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court, and, behold! the Glory of Jehovah filled the House. And I heard Him speaking unto me out of the House, and the man stood by me.

What God had to say.

And He said unto me:—"Child of man! This is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the Children of Israel for ever! And the House of Israel shall no more profane My holy Name, they nor their kings by their apostasy, nor by the burial of their dead kings. In their placing of their houses by My House, and their posts by My posts with only the wall between Me and them, they have even profaned My holy Name by the abominations, which they

have committed. Wherefore I consumed them in My anger. Now let them put away their idolatry and the dead bodies of their kings far from Me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever. Thou Child of man! Show the House to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their evil-doings, and let them measure the pattern, that they be ashamed of all that they have done. Show them the form of the House, and the fashion of it, and the entries and exits, yea all the forms, and all the laws of it. And write it in their sight that they may keep the whole form thereof, and do all the laws of it. This is the law of the House:—Upon the top of the mountain shall it be; the whole portion thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold! this is the law of the House.”

(Ch. xliii. 1-12.)

The measurement of the altar.

Ch. xliii. 13-17 gives the dimensions.

And He said unto me, Child of man! Thus saith Jehovah: These are the laws of the altar, in the day, when they shall make it to offer burnt-offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon. And thou shalt give to the priests, the Levites that be of the house of **Zadok**, who approach unto Me to serve Me, saith Jehovah, a young bullock for a sin-offering. And thou shalt take of the blood thereof, and put it on the four horns of it, and on the four corners of the upper ledge of the altar, and upon the border roundabout; thus shalt thou cleanse, and purge it. Thou shalt also take the bullock of the sin-offering, and he shall burn it in the appointed place of the House, without the Holy Place; and on the second day thou shalt offer a he-goat without blemish for a sin-offering, and they shall cleanse the altar,

as they did cleanse it with the bullock. When thou hast made an end of cleansing it, thou shalt offer a young bullock without blemish, and a ram out of the flock without blemish. And thou shalt offer them before Jehovah, and the priests shall cast salt upon them, and they shall offer them up for a burnt-offering unto Jehovah. Seven days shalt thou prepare every day a he-goat for a sin-offering; they shall also prepare a young bullock, and a ram out of the flock without blemish. Seven days shall they purge the altar and purify it; thus shall they dedicate it. And when these days are finished, it shall be on the eighth day, and after the priests shall offer your burnt-offerings, and your peace-offerings upon the altar, and I will accept you, saith Jehovah.

(Ch. xliii. 18-27.)

Regulations for the East Gate.

Then He brought me back the way of the outer gate of the Holy Place, which looketh toward the east; and it was shut. Then said Jehovah unto me:—‘This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it, because Jehovah, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. It is for the prince alone, the prince shall sit in it to eat bread before Jehovah; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same.’

Arrangement of the priestly services.

Then He brought me the way of the North gate before the House, and I looked, and behold! the Glory of Jehovah filled the House of Jehovah, and I fell upon my face. And Jehovah said unto me, ‘Child of man! attend! Look with thine eyes and hear with thine ears all that I say unto thee

concerning all the ordinances of the House of Jehovah, and all the laws thereof, and consider well how men are to enter the House, and to leave it; and thou shalt say to the house of rebellion, the house of Israel:—Thus saith Jehovah: O House of Israel! Let it suffice you of all your abominations. For ye have brought in aliens, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh to be in My Holy Place, to pollute My House, when ye offer My bread, the fat, and the blood, and in addition to all your abominations ye have broken My Covenant. Yea, ye have not kept the charge concerning My holy things, but ye have set them as keepers of My ordinance in My Holy Place. Therefore thus saith Jehovah: No alien, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into My Holy Place—of any alien that is among the children of Israel. But even the Levites that went away far from Me, when Israel went astray, when they went astray from Me, after their idols—they shall bear their punishment. And they shall be servants in My Sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the House, and servants of the House; they shall slay the burnt-offering, and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to serve them, because they served them before their images, and became a stumbling-block to evil to the House of Israel. Therefore I have sworn against them, saith Jehovah, and they shall bear their punishment. But they shall not come near unto Me, to do the duty of a priest unto Me, and to draw near to any of My holy things, that are most holy; for they shall bear their shame, and the abominations which they have done; and I will make them keepers in charge of the house, for all the work thereof, and for all that shall be done therein.

(Ch. xliv. 1-14.)

The priests of the new Temple.

But the priests, the Levites who are the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of My Sanctuary, when the Children of Israel went astray from Me—they shall come near to Me to serve Me, and they shall stand before Me to offer unto Me the fat and the blood, saith Jehovah ; they shall enter into My Sanctuary, and they shall come near to My Table, to serve Me, and they shall keep the charge I give them.

Regulations for the priesthood.

And it shall come to pass that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments, and they shall wear no wool while they serve in the gates of the inner court, and within. They shall wear linen turbans on their heads, and linen drawers on their loins ; they shall not wear anything that causeth sweat. And when they go forth into the outer court to the people, they shall put off the garments, in which they served, and lay them in the holy chambers, and put on other garments ; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments. Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long ; they shall only cut their hair. Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court. Neither shall they marry a widow, nor one that is divorced, but they shall marry maidens of the seed of the House of Israel, or the widow of a priest. And they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And in cases of controversy they shall stand in judgment. They shall judge in them according to My judgments, and they shall keep My laws and My statutes in all Mine assemblies, and they shall hallow My Sabbaths. They

shall not come near any dead person to defile themselves, save in the cases of their own father, or mother, or son, or daughter or brother, or sister that hath had no husband, they may become unclean. And after he is cleansed, they shall reckon unto him seven days ; and in the day that he goeth in the Sanctuary, into the inner court, to serve in the Sanctuary, he shall offer his sin-offering, saith Jehovah. And they shall have no inheritance—I am their inheritance, neither shall ye give them any possession in Israel—I am their possession. They shall eat the meal-offering, and the sin-offering, and the trespass-offering, and everything^l in Israel that is dedicated shall be theirs. And the first of all the firstfruits of all things, and every oblation of all, of every sort of your oblations, shall be the priests' ; ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough, that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house. The priests shall not eat of anything that has died of itself, or was torn, whether it be fowl or beast. (Ch. xliv. 15-31.)

CHAPTER XI.

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE LAND. REGULATIONS FOR PRINCE AND PEOPLE.

The priests' land.

And when ye shall divide the land for inheritance, ye shall offer as an offering unto Jehovah an holy portion of the land—the length shall be the length of five and twenty thousand cubits, and the breadth shall be twenty thousand. This shall be holy in all the borders thereof round about. Of this there shall be for the Sanctuary five hundred in length, and five hundred in breadth, square round about,

and fifty cubits round about for a free space. And of this measure shalt thou measure the length of five and twenty thousand, and the breadth of ten thousand, and in it shall be the Sanctuary that is most holy. It is a holy portion of the land, and it shall be for the priests that serve the Sanctuary, who shall come near to serve Jehovah ; and it shall be a place for their houses and a place for the Sanctuary. And five and twenty thousand cubits in length, and ten thousand in breadth shall the Levites the servants of the House have for themselves, for a possession for cities to dwell in. And ye shall appoint the possession for the city five thousand broad and five and twenty thousand long over against the oblation of the holy portion ; it shall be for the whole House of Israel. And a portion shall be for the prince on the one side, and on the other side of the oblation of the holy portion, and before the possession of the city, from the west side westward, and from the east side eastward, and in length corresponding to one of the portions from the west border unto the east border. In the land it shall be his possession in Israel ; and My princes shall no more oppress My people, but shall give the land to the House of Israel according to their tribes.

(Ch. xlv. 1-8.)

Regulation of this possession.

Thus saith Jehovah :—If the prince give a gift unto any of his sons of his inheritance, it shall be his son's ; it shall be his possession by inheritance ; but if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, then it shall be his to the year of liberty ; after it shall return to the prince, but the inheritance of his sons shall be their own. And the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance by

oppression, to thrust them out of their possession. He shall give his sons inheritance out of his own possession, that My people be not scattered every man from his possession.
(Ch. xlv. 16-18.)

An instruction to the Royal House. Weights and measures.

Thus saith Jehovah :—

Let it suffice you, O Princes of Israel! Remove violence, and spoiling, execute judgment, and justice! Cease expelling My people from their possession, saith Jehovah.

Ye shall have just balances, a just weight, and a just measure. The weight and the measure shall be of one standard so that the measure may contain a tenth part of the **homer**, and the weight shall also be the tenth part of an homer; the standard thereof shall be the homer. And the shekel shall be twenty gerahs; five shekels shall be five shekels, and ten shekels shall be ten, and fifty shekels shall be your **maneh**.

Concerning offerings.

This is the oblation that ye shall offer :—a sixth part of an ephah out of an homer of wheat, and ye shall give the sixth part of an ephah out of an homer of barley. Concerning the ordinance of oil, the measure of oil, ye shall offer the tenth part of a bath out of a cor (which is the same as an homer of ten measures), for ten baths are an homer. And one kid out of every two hundred of the flock, out of all the families of Israel, for a meal-offering and for thank-offerings, to make atonement for them, saith Jehovah.

All the people of the land shall give this offering for the prince in Israel, and it shall be the prince's part to give burnt-offerings, and meal-offerings, and drink-offerings in

the feasts, and in the new moons, and on the Sabbaths in all the appointed seasons of the House of Israel. He shall provide the sin-offering, and the meal-offering, and the burnt-offering, and the thank-offerings to make atonement for the House of Israel.

Thus saith Jehovah:—In the first month, on the first day of the month, thou shalt take a young bullock without blemish, and cleanse the Sanctuary from sin; and the priest shall take of the blood of the sin-offering, and put it upon the posts of the House, and upon the four corners of the settle of the altar, and upon the posts of the gate of the inner court. And so thou shalt do in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, for every one that erreth, and for him that is ignorant, so shall ye make atonement for the House.

The Passover.

In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall keep the passover, a feast of seven days: unleavened bread shall be eaten. And on that day shall the Prince provide for himself, and for all the people of the land a bullock for a sin-offering. And the seven days of the feast he shall provide a burnt-offering for Jehovah, seven bullocks, and seven rams without blemish daily during the seven days, and a he-goat daily for a sin-offering. And he shall provide a meal-offering of a measure for a bullock, and a measure for a ram, and a hin* of oil for a measure. In the seventh month, on the fifteenth day of the month, in the feast shall he do the same for the seven days, according to the sin-offering, according to the burnt-offering, and according to the meal-offering, and according to the oil.

(Ch. xlv. 9-25.)

* Hin = $\frac{1}{8}$ th part of a measure or ephah.

The regulation of worship.

Thus saith Jehovah :—The gate of the inner court that is toward the east shall be shut during the six days of work, but on the Sabbath it shall be opened, and on the day of the new moon it shall be opened. And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of the gate without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priests shall prepare his burnt-offering and his thank-offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate. Then he shall go forth, but the gate shall not be shut until the evening. Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before Jehovah on the Sabbaths, and in the new moons. And the burnt-offering that the Prince shall offer unto Jehovah on the Sabbath day shall be six lambs, without blemish, and a ram without blemish. And the meal-offering shall be a measure for a ram, and the meal-offering for the lambs as much as he gives, and an hin of oil to a measure. And on the day of the new moon, it shall be a young bullock without blemish, and six lambs, and a ram ; they shall be without blemish. And he shall prepare a meal-offering, a measure for a bullock, and a measure for a ram, and for the lambs as much as he can give, and an hin of oil to a measure. And when the Prince shall enter, he shall go in by the way of the porch of the gate, and he shall go forth by the way of it. But when the people of the land shall come before Jehovah in their appointed feasts, he that entereth in by the North gate to worship shall go out by the South gate, and he that entereth by the South gate shall go out by the North gate. He shall not return by the gate whereby he came in, but shall go out by the one opposite to it. (The prince, however, when he goes in in the midst of the people as

they go in shall go forth by the gate by which he came in.) And in the feasts and in the appointed seasons, the meal-offering shall be a measure to a bullock, and a measure to a ram, and to lambs, as much as he can give, and an hin of oil for the measure. Now when the prince shall provide a voluntary burnt-offering or thank-offering voluntarily unto Jehovah the gate that is toward the East shall be opened for him, and he shall provide his burnt-offerings, and his thank-offerings, as he did on the Sabbath day; then he shall go out, and after his departure the gate shall be shut.

The daily offerings.

He shall provide a burnt-offering daily for Jehovah—even a lamb of the first year without blemish. He shall provide it morning by morning. He shall also provide a meal-offering for it every morning, the sixth part of a measure, and the third part of an hin of oil to mix with the fine flour—a meal-offering continually by a perpetual ordinance unto Jehovah. Thus shall they provide the lamb, and the meal-offering, and the oil every morning for a continual burnt-offering. (Ch. xlv. 1-15).

Chap. xlv. 16-18, see page 135.

Chap. xlv. 19-24 describe the kitchens of the temple-servants.

The river of life.

And He brought me unto the door of the House, and behold! there was a stream coming forth from under the threshold of the House towards the East; for the front of the House was towards the East, and the stream came down from under on the right side of the House at the South side of the altar. He then brought me out by the gate to the

North, and led me about the way without unto the outer gate, which looketh toward the East, and behold ! there came forth a stream on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the stream—the water was up to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and he brought me through the stream—the water was up to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through—the water was up to the loins. Again he measured a thousand—it was a torrent that I could not pass over, for the water was risen, fit for swimming in—a torrent that could not be passed over.

And he said unto me, Child of man ! Hast thou seen this ? Then he brought me, and caused me to walk along the brink of the torrent. As I went along behold ! on the bank of the torrent were very many trees on the one side, and on the other. Then said he unto me, “ This stream goeth out toward the East part of the country, and down towards the **Arabah**, and to the sea into the bitter waters, which shall be healed ; and it shall come to pass that every living creature that swarmeth, in every place where the waters shall come, shall live, and there shall be a very great multitude of fish. When these waters shall come thither, they shall be healed, and there shall be life wherever the river cometh. And it shall come to pass that fishers shall stand by it ; from **En-gedi**, even unto En-eglaim shall be a place to spread nets upon ; their fish shall be various, as the fish of the Mediterranean, exceeding many. But the miry places, and the marshes thereof shall not be healed ; they shall be kept for salt. And by the torrent upon the bank hereof, on either side shall grow all trees for meat, the leaf of which shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof

fail ; it shall bring forth new fruit every month, because the waters thereof issue out of the Sanctuary, and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for healing.

(Ch. xlvii. 1-12).

Concluding part with allotted boundaries.

Thus saith Jehovah :—This shall be the border, by which ye shall inherit the land, according to the twelve Tribes of Israel—Joseph having two portions. And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another—the land, which I swear to give unto your fathers ; and this land shall fall unto you for an inheritance. And this shall be the boundary of the land on the North ; from the Mediterranean, at **Hethlon**, at the entering in of Hamath by Zedad, Berothah, Sibraim, which is between the border of Damascus, and the border of Hamath, Hazar the middle village, which is by the district of Hauran. So the boundary from the sea, shall be Hazar-enan at the border of Damascus, and on the north northwards the border shall be Hamath. This is the north border. And the East side : from between Hauran, and Damascus, between Gilead and the land of Israel shall be the Jordan, from the north boundary unto the eastern sea, even unto **Tamar** ; this is the east side. And the south side southward, from Tamar on to the waters of **Meriboth-Kadesh** to the **brook** (of Egypt) and unto the Mediterranean ; this is the south side southward. The west side also shall be the Mediterranean from the south border to the entering in of Hamath. This is the west side. So shall ye divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel. And it shall be that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers, that sojourn among you, who shall beget children among you, for they shall be unto you as born in the country among the Children of Israel ; they shall

have inheritance with you among the Tribes of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth there shall ye give him an inheritance, saith Jehovah.

(Ch. xlvii. 13-23.)

The location of the Tribes.

Now these are the names and order of the Tribes:—From the north—Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, Judah. And by the border of Judah from the East side unto the West side shall be the portion offered of five and twenty thousand cubits in breadth, and in length as one of the other portions. And the Sanctuary shall be in the midst of it. The portion that ye shall offer unto Jehovah shall be five and twenty thousand cubits in length, and twenty thousand in breadth. And for them—*i.e.*, the priests—shall be the holy offering. It shall be for the priests that are sanctified, the sons of Zadok, who have kept My commandment, and who went not astray as the Levites did, when the Children of Israel went astray. And it shall be for them as an offering out of the offering of the land, a thing most holy by the border of the Levites. And alongside of the border of the priests the Levites shall have five and twenty thousand cubits in length and ten thousand in breadth. And they shall not sell any of it, neither exchange, nor alienate this—the firstfruits of the land; for it is holy unto Jehovah.

(Ch. xlviii. 1-14.)

The ground of the city.

And the five thousand cubits that remain in the breadth in front of the five and twenty thousand shall be for the common use of the city, for dwellings and pasture ground, and the city shall be in the midst thereof—four thousand five hundred cubits square, while the free space around shall be two hundred and fifty on each side. And what

remains of the length in front of the offering of the holy portions shall be ten thousand East and West, and the fruit thereof shall be for them that belong to the city; (and they that belong to the city shall belong to it out of all the Tribes of Israel). All the portion offered shall be five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand; the holy portion ye offer shall be four square, with the possession of the city. And the remainder shall be for the Prince, on the one side, and on the other of the holy offering, and of the possession of the city, in front of the five and twenty thousand cubits of the offering toward the East border, and Westward in front of the five and twenty thousand toward the West border, by the side of the portions for the Prince it shall be; and the holy offering, and the sanctuary of the House shall be in the midst thereof. Thus from the possession of the Levites, and from the possession of the city, which is in the midst of what is the prince's, between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin the portion shall be for the prince. Then southwards in order Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, and Gad have each their portion. This is the land that ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes of Israel for inheritance, and these are your portions, saith Jehovah.

The city, its size, gates, and name.

The extent of the city each way shall be four thousand five hundred cubits: it shall have twelve gates called after the Tribes—three on each side; its total measurement round about shall be eighteen thousand cubits, and the name of the city from that day shall be Jehovah-Shammah (The Lord is there). (Ch. xlviii. 15-23, 30, 35.)

DIVISION II.

THE PROPHECIES OF EZEKIEL READ IN THEIR HISTORICAL SETTING.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONSECRATION OF THE PROPHET, AND HIS VISION OF GOD (592 B.C.).

EZEKIEL the prophet exercised his prophetic calling wholly in the region of the captivity, and among the captive Children of his people. Not in the sacred precincts of the Temple as had been Isaiah's happy experience, or among the devoted, and like-minded band of men who furthered, and hailed Josiah's reformation, as Jeremiah's lot was, but far from home, and home-privilege in a strange land Ezekiel heard the voice of God, and saw that vision of Jehovah which called him from being a priest, and consecrated him to the office of a prophet, in the prophetic succession to the great men whom we have just mentioned. Probably he was about thirty years old at this time, and so was no 'child' as Jeremiah had regarded himself. He had been already five years in captivity. The flower of the Jewish nation had been carried away by Nebuchadrezzar along with Jehoiachin, and the royal household in 597 B.C. They had been settled in South Babylonia. With them had gone the young priest Ezekiel. Jeremiah was then prophesying in Jerusalem, and he remained at home at the post of duty and of danger. The prophet

lived and flourished from 626 to 561 B.C.; but Ezekiel his successor was in part his contemporary, for he entered upon his ministry in 592 B.C., and uttered his last words in 572 B.C. Jerusalem was finally captured, and destroyed by the Babylonian conqueror in 586 B.C.; so that our prophet prophesied for five years before this sad crisis came about, and after he had been silent for a similar period among the Children of the Captivity. We have no satisfactory information about his death, but most probably he must have died and been buried in Babylon, where his wife had predeceased him. The opening reference to thirty years may be regarded as indicating the prophet's age. But whether it does or does not, is not of supreme importance. He was now of full age, having been a young man when carried from home. This period of thirty years from the opening of Ezekiel's ministry, carries us back to two very interesting epochs. In 623 B.C. or thereabouts the dynasty of which Nebuchadrezzar was the most distinguished monarch began its sway under his father Nabopolassar. This year marks the wane of Nineveh, and the distinct rise of Babylon to the position of supremacy once more. While also about this very time in Jerusalem the Law book had been brought forth and read to the people, giving to king and prophet authority and impetus in a wide and radical reformation of religion. Ezekiel must have been fully familiar with, and greatly influenced by, the teaching of Jeremiah, and this reformation of Josiah. He saw how both had come too late to avert the great catastrophe of which his own removal into captivity was a sure presage. When Jehoiakim became king in Jerusalem (608 B.C.) on the tragic death of Josiah, the prophet Jeremiah had to run the gauntlet of opposition, and this

became open and undisguised persecution in 597 B.C. when Zedekiah became king, and in puny endeavour strove to set aside the authority of his superior, to whose favour he owed his throne. The foolish move and illusive hopes of Zedekiah Jeremiah condemned most resolutely, only to find himself a prisoner under strict supervision. As thus in 592 B.C. every effort is being made by man to close one prophetic mouth, God in His divine providence opens another by the Chabor in Babylon, to deliver the same testimony and to do the same work ; for the divine Hand is never shortened, and human extremity is always divine opportunity. Right in the centre of the Chaldæan Empire (for here we must find the Chabor, and not at Carchemish), does God raise up Ezekiel to declare the temporary success and the final overthrow of Babylon. For the dynasty which began in 622 B.C. culminated in 586 B.C. and ignominiously disappeared in 539 B.C. As we take up this book we see the prophet musing among the captives of Tel Abib—the Cornhill of Babylon, and above him the heavens opened that so he saw visions of God, even as John did in lonely sea-washed Patmos. It is worthy of note that vv. 2 and 3 are in the third person, while vv. 1 and 4 présent the prophet in the first person, while the visions of God here vouchsafed are again referred to in Ch. viii. 3 and xl. 2. The very exact way too in which not only the year, but also the month, and the day are given deserves our attention as indicating the spirit of respect for accuracy of detail shown by the prophet. This difference in person reveals two hands, the prophet's own and that of a later editor at work here.

The statement of the editor is, that the hand of Jehovah was upon him, while that of the prophet is, " I saw visions

of God, and I looked and behold!" Ezekiel was a seer. He saw God. A vision of the Shekinah-Glory flashed upon him, and he marked its character, and movement. Here in the prophetic consecration we find these essential elements—the divine touch, the coming of a divine voice, and the seeing of a divine vision; in these three ways God brings Himself nigh to man; in these ways He makes prophets. But it is the theophany or self-revelation of God to Ezekiel that arrested him, and impresses us here. Jerusalem and its sacred Temple are for him the chief subject of thought; against them comes a Whirlwind—some great and terrible invasion from the North. But as he looks he sees so much more in this Whirlwind, than can be explained on any ordinary view of things; he sees so much that is inexplicable to the human mind in it, for in it he sees God and His attendant Cherubim with their mysterious form and flash. The four faces were those of man, lion, ox and eagle, being thus representative of reason, courage, industry and flight, four great attributes of a perfect Intelligence. Above them was a throne on a dais of glory, and on that throne sate the Almighty, moving on to the fulfilment of His Purpose in history. How striking here is the representation of God in human form! A new thought then, yet this is the lesson Ezekiel learnt and found precious in his own experience, that God moves on in history accomplishing His Plan; in this thought and representation we can see an anticipation of what is fundamental in the doctrine of Incarnation—'God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.' The truths of the indwelling and supreme control of the Divine Spirit are beautifully set before us in the movement of the wheels, so completely subordinate are they! The brilliance and

splendour of the Theophany so impressed St John that he used it for his own description of his Lord. Dazzled and awed Ezekiel fell on his face, only however to be recalled to himself and to duty by the Voice divine, which nerved him for his high responsibility, and sent him with a commission even to the rebellious nations of the House of Israel—for now Ezekiel speaks not to Judah alone, but to both kingdoms, who had both rebelled against Jehovah. The term, Child of man, here applied to the prophet, and used ninety times in the course of the prophecy, mark him in his humanity as distinct from the self-revealing God; while the term House of Rebellion, as applied to Israel, is also characteristic of this prophecy, as rebellion was now a confirmed characteristic of the people. The prophet is called to a service of supreme obedience, even to speak in God's great Name with a "Thus saith Jehovah," and with only God-given words. What God gave He had so to assimilate, and make his own, as one does when he eats his food; the apparently bitter roll became then as honey for sweetness. But on no easy and pleasant task was Ezekiel sent any more than his great predecessors; he was sent among briers and thorns and scorpions. His face must be like adamant, and his heart like a rock. For this mission he was prepared by having seen God, and in it he is sustained by the presence of God. He makes his start under the direct guidance of the Spirit of God, but manifestly he was being very powerfully led and disciplined. It was no self-sought work he now undertook; his feelings were deeply moved, and for seven days he sat in silence among his fellow-captives, finding no word in which to express what he thought. But at length God gave him his exact

position, and showed him how to speak, and what to say as a divinely appointed watchman. These seven days of silence between the consecration and the full appointment are days of value to the prophet, as he gradually understands his new duties, and learns somewhat of the ways of God. For now he is ready to enter upon his great life-work of warning Israel of their sin, and declaring the righteousness of God in dealing with individual men. By the teaching of Jeremiah, and the circumstances of the times, it begins to be seen and realized that the individual soul has a value all its own, and life and happiness are found to depend not on any relation to a community, but on relation to holiness and God.

CHAPTER II.

EZEKIEL'S FIRST MINISTRY BY SYMBOLIC ACTION AND SOLEMN WORD (592 B.C.).

BUT our prophet is not allowed to speak again until he receives another vision of God ; nay, he is not allowed to speak at any time until he receives direct instruction as to when he is to speak, and what he is to say. This divine restraining is important. All the natural tendency, and enthusiasm of humanity seem here to be curbed ; God will have His servant to be His mouthpiece alone. A great solemnity, and high responsibility thus rest upon the utterance of the prophetic formula—"Thus saith the Lord"—a formula so largely abused by the false teachers of the time. The prophet is not only consecrated by a divine touch, but he is to live and move under its ever-present influence. He is not only at the beginning of his

ministry to hear the Voice divine, he is always to have an open ear, and hear ; so that in speaking to men he may call upon them to hear from his lips the very words of God—the words of life and duty. But now before the time of actual prophesying by word of mouth, Ezekiel is led to proceed by way of symbolic action in setting forth the divine purpose of bringing a speedy judgment upon Jerusalem. And this is the burden both of symbol and spoken word from the commencement of his ministry in 592 B.C. to 587 B.C., when the judgment came to pass, and every word spoken by Jeremiah and Ezekiel was substantially and sadly fulfilled. Vain hopes had gathered round King Zedekiah, and his patriotic but too-late endeavours to secure Jerusalem's independence. These hopes seem to have been shared not alone by the supporters of the Court at home, but even by many of the Exiles in Babylon—they naturally welcoming any new turn of events that might lead to the overthrow of the power of Nebuchadrezzar. But in Jerusalem the prophet Jeremiah demonstrated by his symbol of an unbreakable iron yoke, that Babylon was irresistible at this time, while his brother-prophet by the Chabor felt constrained by equally expressive symbols to declare the same truth. Jeremiah was openly opposed by a false teacher called Hananiah ; so also were Ezekiel's comrades being misled by false guides. For when Jeremiah had caused the substance of his teaching about the seventy years' captivity to be conveyed to Babylon, he found himself also bound to condemn three leading men who were seeking to inflame the Exiles with false hopes of an early return home—viz., Ahab, Zedekiah, and Shemaiah. The conduct of these men is not referred to by name in the prophecy before us, but we find as strong a denuncia-

tion of false prophets in Ezekiel as in Jeremiah, and as clear an indication that harm was being done to true prophecy by the rash use of prophetic formulæ by unauthorized voices, who spoke of the days being at hand for return. The true prophets of Jehovah with their keen sense of their people's sin in departing from God, and their truer discernment of the times, saw that before this could come about there had to be a great manifestation of divine wrath against the sinful city. In their declaration of the certainty of this judgment neither Jeremiah nor Ezekiel for a moment wavered. In the passages of Ezekiel now before us we have four symbolic illustrations, all teaching this same truth. In the first we have a picture of a definite siege, in which Jerusalem is the city besieged, and the prophet is led, so strong is his conviction of the necessity of the coming event, to be himself the besieger in symbol, as well as the prophet in word. In the second illustration we find the prophet, deeply sensible of his nation's guilt, and liability to punishment, made to suffer the burden of it in his own person. What could more effectually prove the prophet's deep and firm conviction than this? There is no need to hold that the prophet actually lay for the whole period here mentioned vicariously bearing the guilt of his people; it is sufficient that we should see that the great spiritual lesson was being understood and taught by personal example and prophetic experience, that an intense realisation of a nation's sin by one servant of God led to that one servant suffering for that sin vicariously and representatively, the one thus bearing the guilt of the many. The spiritual teaching of this section anticipates that of Isaiah liii., which was thus the finished expression of a grand prophetic conscious-

ness, realised in measure in every great and worthy act of self-sacrifice, and fully embodied in the life and dying of Jesus Christ. Here we must emphasize as essential elements in the prophet's mind the following facts—viz., great guilt, and its necessary punishment. As subordinate elements, we have the definite times of suffering—that of Israel lasting 190 years (as probably in the original), *i.e.*, from 736 B.C., when Samaria first began to be led into captivity, to 546 B.C., when hopes of Restoration began to be entertained; that of Judah lasting 40 years, *i.e.*, from the Fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., to about the same time. The actual return from captivity took place after the Decree of Cyrus in 539 B.C., but the power of this destined deliverer was being consolidated about 546 B.C. The forty years here spoken of may, however, be meant generally as a period of bondage suggested by the Wilderness-experience of Israel. The same period is elsewhere referred to as being that of the Babylonian supremacy.* The distinct mention of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah is here important, because later on prophecy unites, as history does, the two lines of the kingdoms, so long divergent, in the glorious return of one people, under the one name of Israel, and under a prince of the House of David. In the third illustration we have the symbol of a protracted siege, with the character of the provision that would be required at such a time, as well as the care in its distribution requisite in a time of scarcity when fear of failing supply would fill all minds. While, lastly, in the symbol of the head shaved, as by a sword in time of war, and the division of the hair, we have a graphic picture of national mourning, and the scattering, and destruction of the people. The prophet

* Ch. xxix. on page 82.

then definitely explains that this terrible judgment had to come upon Jerusalem for her aggravated sin. To his mind this sin was much greater than that found among the heathen nations, for in Judah there was increased guilt, because there had been increased privilege. The honour of Jehovah's name was very specially concerned in the matter, hence the punishment of Jerusalem was to be a signal manifestation of divine vengeance in a most public manner in the presence of these nations. For it is never enough that sin should be punished, it is necessary that it should be punished publicly and before all. Publicity is one of the important sanctions of justice. Upon the terribly complete nature of this public judgment the prophet dwells with an almost harrowing reference to details. Famine, plague, and sword—this threefold scourge must do their awful work; such is the fiat of Jehovah, who speaks, and it is done. The grievous sin of idolatry had polluted the mountains, the valleys, and the river-beds of Israel; for the purification of the land from such defilement no slight measures would avail. Judgment of the severest kind must come, and while scattering the people from their old homes, it would also wean them from their old habits, so that when the hour for return should strike, they might come back completely cured of idolatry, recognising that because of this particular sin they had been so severely dealt with. Few at that time, perhaps, sympathized with the zeal of a prophet who smote with his hand, and stamped with his foot as he denounced the wickedness of idolatry; but he knew that afterwards when the divine chastisement should have done its work, the returning people would loathe themselves for all the evil they had done in all their forbidden practices. The return would not only be a

return home, but a return to Jehovah—a better and more valuable thing. And thus over and over again we have the prophetic refrain, so characteristic of Ezekiel's writings as to occur above fifty times: 'Then they shall know that I am Jehovah.' For the peculiarity of Israel as a people separate from all other peoples was in this that they were to know God—to have a definite and distinct knowledge of Jehovah. Hence the prophets and the law. It is a false representation of Israel's religion that would make it consist mainly in an elaborate system of religious rites; against this every prophetic voice was raised in protest. No, it was the privilege of Israel to have a revelation of God as Jehovah, and their function to preserve and hand on that revelation to their posterity. It was their sin that they failed to appreciate this knowledge, and their overthrow came, because they did not keep it pure. This distinctive name of God we use throughout this prophecy believing that it was that used by Ezekiel, and the only reading that explains or harmonizes the original.

CHAPTER III.

THE STATE OF JERUSALEM 591 B.C. SECOND YEAR'S PROPHECY.

THE sixth year of captivity for Ezekiel was the second year of his prophetic career, when he was already being recognised in some measure by the elders of his people as a prophet of Jehovah. They were gathered to his house, and while there the Hand of God fell upon him, so that he again saw visions. In answer to their enquiries he declares

the then evil and sinful condition of Jerusalem, of which he is actually aware, and which, as in a distinct vision, he now sees. What meets his view is sad enough; for at the gate of the inner court of the Temple stood an image of Ashtoreth, the abomination of the Phœnicians, called here the Image of Jealousy, with special reference to Deut. xxxii. 16, where Judah is said to "have provoked God to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations provoked they Him to anger." How great the contrast between the Glory of Jehovah, so worthy of allegiance and reverence, and this foreign importation, the whole worship of which was so sensuous, and demoralizing. The presence of such a worship and ritual in the Temple so completely desecrated the Holy Place that Jehovah could not longer remain there. The Law claimed not only supremacy for Jehovah, but as over, or among other gods Aloneness and Oneness as God. "Hear, O Israel; Jehovah is our God: Jehovah is One." "Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people round about you; (for Jehovah thy God is a jealous God among you)" (Deut. vi. 4, 14). Not alone did the worship of Ashtoreth prevail, but even the secret rites of Egyptian idolatry were found practised in the very chambers of the Temple, and taken part in by representative men. This compliance with the religious ways of Egypt was the natural consequence of the political intrigues with the House of the Pharaohs now in vogue at Zedekiah's court. Men who had rejected God's will and purpose as declared by Jeremiah spoke of God as if He had first forsaken them, and no longer concerned Himself in their welfare—the truth being that the divine forsaking only came about as a last resort, when they had resolutely and deliberately

forsaken Him. Nay the prophet would have us see the Shekinah-Glory unwilling to leave the Temple, still lingering in grace near its courts, if perchance Jehovah may yet again be honoured, and finally leaving only when compelled so to do. Peculiarly obnoxious to a worshipper of Jehovah were all secret rites and religious mysteries confined to the few, and done of them in the darkness—such rites and mysteries as were of the very essence of Greek and Egyptian religions. These old systems have their deities pourtrayed not only in sculptured or molten figure, but also in *al fresco* portraits on the walls of the Temple. The magnificent ruins of the buried cities of Egypt, more and more being seen, show this. Among the Hindus the walls of houses are covered in large detail to this day with pictures of Indian deities. In Jerusalem Adonis also was worshipped by the women, while the Magian, or Parsi worship of the Sun also found supporters. In short, at this particular time, nearly every sort of heathen worship had its representatives in Jerusalem, so complete was the dissolution of the true monotheistic principle, and so subject was the people to religious influence from every quarter. Thus entirely was Jehovah held in contempt, and all the promises for Judah's well-being and Jerusalem's inviolability, bound up in the maintenance of a pure worship, were disregarded. But though the elders and the priests despised God, there were still those that sighed and cried for all these abominations—the elect among the people, so that when the terrible work of execution was to be carried through, these faithful ones were to be marked with a cross on their foreheads and delivered. As the prophet sees how few are being spared he is deeply moved, and in the

manner of Jeremiah interjects an intercessory prayer. Prayer now, however, is too late; the decree of doom has gone forth; it cannot be stayed even by a Samuel, a Job, or a Daniel. Fire too must come forth, and consume the city. Thus the sword and fire are seen by the prophet as about to do their dread work. And now as a third vision there is vouchsafed unto the prophet a fuller view of the Cherubim. In the record of the exclusion of our first parents from the Garden, and of the construction of the Holy of Holies the Cherubim play an important part as being in close association with the Shekinah-Glory—close and near, yet entirely different and distinct, for herein lay the demarcation between the worship of Jehovah, and the idolatrous customs of the heathen. Here God is represented as seated upon them; they are the guardians and representatives of sacred things. Such actually carved figures Ezekiel saw in Babylon in the winged bulls that were placed in the temples (called Kirubi), but while perhaps using all this by way of description he uses it symbolically and spiritually—these Cherubim never being “objects of worship, but only symbols of God’s holy presence.” As a priest Ezekiel must have been familiar with the Cherubim in the Temple, and as now deeply exercised about the prevailing degradation of the Holy place he sees the Cherubim not in their wonted place within but outside, and the Glory of Jehovah as seated above them. The prophet’s aim and desire is to follow God as he sees Him moving; where God is, there should he be, whither God leads, thither he should follow. He sees God leaving Jerusalem, but he also perceives that his conviction is not shared by the leaders of the people. They have perfect confidence, and feel themselves as safe

as flesh in the cauldron ; they had no anticipation that soon the cauldron was to be broken to pieces, and the flesh cast out. The twenty-five men against whom Ezekiel now prophesies represented the High Priest, and the twenty-four classes of the priesthood, and while the prophet was declaring the solemn judgment of God upon the city, one of those strange coincidences happened that serve to impress all, and to give emphasis to the circumstances in which they were placed. Pelatiah, the son of Benaiah, a leading priest in Jerusalem died. In this the prophet was afraid that he saw an augury of what was coming, and in anguish of spirit he enquired as to whether none were to be saved at all. The answer reminds us of Jeremiah's words about the good and the bad figs. They who had been carried away were the good figs ; the future lay with them, and not with those who remained behind. Yet the residue vainly imagined that they had a monopoly of the land and of privilege, and they looked in contempt on those who had been scattered abroad, deprived of Sanctuary, and Home. To these who were thus despised of their own countrymen, and to whom the future seemed dark enough, the promise of restoration comes—of ingathering, but only after the present city and its present occupants should be overthrown. A new people with a new heart would occupy a new city ; for the old people with their old heart going after idols had brought destruction on the old city of David. This forcible removal of those, who were so vainly confident in the continuance of the *status quo*, is set forth strikingly under the figure of a flitting, which again in his own person, by way of symbol, the prophet is ordered to carry out. Some very definite and visible mode of demonstration is required to convince men so unbelieving of

what is to be ; for by being in a state of rebellion against God their eyes are of no use to see, nor their ears to hear what He would have them see and hear in the ordinary course of providence. To make manifest that his prophecy of a speedily coming exile was no pious dream, but a deep settled conviction of his heart he carries it out by way of type in action, even as Isaiah and Hosea named their children with significant names to stamp their prophecies with the seal of personal conviction ; in this way the prophets gave the strongest proof they could of their own belief in what they said : they did as they taught. A very distinct reference is then made to King Zedekiah, who was so shortly to be carried away in blindness to the land of the Chaldeans. The more particular reference to the putting out of the king's eyes need not be regarded as a later addition, when the customs of these days are borne in mind ; it was perfectly in keeping with Ezekiel's whole teaching so to represent Zedekiah as carried away in blindness. But even if the words were made more definite and pointed afterwards, when actually the king had thus been carried away, no wonder need be expressed ; and a sense of loss will be experienced only by those, who find the proofs of inspiration in a prediction of small and petty details, rather than in a grand application of eternal principles to life and conduct.

Ezekiel shared with Jeremiah the opposition of those, who disbelieved in the coming judgment, and therefore disregarded those, whose mission it was to declare it. Very much more agreeable to the fleshly instincts of the nation was it to speak not of judgment, but of deliverance ; but in so doing they were following their own inclinations, and not subordinating these to the mind and will of God.

It is not what men like, that prophets have to declare, but what is right. Ezekiel not only felt this, but he knew that all genuine prophecy must find fulfilment, and that his own was sadly near its realization. What Micah began to contemplate as a dread possibility so early as 720-710 B.C.: what Jeremiah had to make the chief burden of his message in 609 and onwards—this Ezekiel felt keenly as very near, as the storm cloud which burst five years later on the ill-fated city was now gathering around him. What was in the dim and distant future when Micah spoke was now at the very door; it was now no longer to be delayed. Alas! that men so largely discount what is distant from them, failing to remember that every year brings it nearer! What a striking figure is here used to represent men—foxes among ruins! Playing themselves in time of danger, and taking no effective measures to ward off the near attack. When judgment is threatened, the proper course is not to pooh-pooh the threat, but rather to consider the circumstances, and if evil prevails to have it removed. False prophets may have a short-lived popularity, but their names never do appear on any permanent roll of God's worthies. The temporizing policy of such men is brought out as a method of daubing over with whitewash the slight and flimsy walls, which the people have built for themselves. In every age the populace erect their own defences, bring forward their own excuses, and plead their own views. They ask for the approval of God and His servants for what they thus devise. States, societies, and individuals draw up their own policies and programmes with little if any regard to God at all, and then expect His blessing; they look to ministers of religion to say Amen to what they do. Thus

God's prophets are simply to be whitewashers-in-chief to the walls of a temporary expediency, or a utilitarian morality. All this, however, is essentially wrong; all such walls, and all such whitewashing shall be vain when God arises to judgment. It behoves individuals to see that all their defences are well and truly built; it equally behoves all ministers of religion to see that they give not the slightest approval to anything that may not harmonize with truth and righteousness. For if this is not done, people and prophet, state and church will fall together in a terrible catastrophe.

Not alone did false prophets abound, but even false prophetesses. In a time of social and spiritual anarchy this is always found; and the power for evil, when exercised by women, is even greater than that she can wield for good. Ezekiel has to use strongest language in his denunciation of this special manifestation of evil. He exposes all their peculiar tricks, and condemns them as so many arts to catch silly men, as if they were birds to be caught by enchantments, and incantations. In every time there are fools and simpletons thus deluded by outward charms:—men who are not serious enough to look below the surface, and intelligent enough to understand causes and effects.

And at this moment a deputation waits upon the prophet to hear the Word of God at his mouth. Knowing as he does that the men are given over to idolatry, and are not really sincere in coming to him, how can he speak to them? This only he can say, first of all at least, "Repent, and turn from your idols!" Till like Ephraim, men say, "What have I to do with idols?" God cannot speak to them; they are joined to their idols, and must be left severely alone, until they give up their sin. God Him-

self is the alone discerner of hearts—the only true answerer of men, but a solemn responsibility is laid here on all God's servants to be very faithful in dealing with men; for both enquirer and prophet shall meet a like doom, if they proceed in religious matters without making a clean sweep at the very start of everything that is sinful in God's sight. Enquirers about the way of God, sincerely desirous to know it more fully must begin by an abandonment of every evil way. If they are willing to do the doctrine, they shall know concerning its truth; if they are willing to be a people for God, they will find God more than willing to be a God for them.

And to this end judgment must do its work. From sin and evil ways men are not weaned by sunshine and smiles; severe measures are required. Such measures were now to be used against Jerusalem; at whatever cost idolatry must have an end. Famine, beasts of prey, the sword of cruel enemies, and terrible pestilence—all these must come upon a guilty land, as a distinct vindication of the divine law, which had been broken. The presence of the righteous few would not avail to stay the doom; they would save their own lives by their righteousness, but not that of any of their kinsfolk. The ten righteous men of Abraham's prayer were conceived to have an influence not now accorded even to outstanding saints, such as Noah, Daniel, and Job. Of course there would be a remnant who would escape; and they would be vindicators of God's way; they would remember their own, and their fathers' sins, and declare the absolute righteousness of the divine doings. The prophet is concerned that this at least should be put beyond all doubt and question, that "God is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works."

CHAPTER IV.

ALLEGORIES AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF JUDGMENT

(591 B.C.).

THE prophet still continues his dread burden ; of judgment still he has to sing. The emphatic reiteration of the fact that judgment is coming, and must come, with the illustration of this sad reality in many ways, shows us how unwilling the Jews, even those in exile, were as yet to realise the overthrow of their city, and the beautiful House in which they had worshipped God. All this was so manifestly against the grain—such an unwelcome thought, that it required all the earnestness of two great prophets to press it home ; and even, when all was said that they could say, how far were the people from believing ! So strange was the work God was about to do that they would not believe it, even when it was told them by prophetic voice ; only seeing in such a case could bring believing. For Jerusalem had occupied a position of highest privilege, and was entrenched in a great number of distinct promises given to David's house. Isaiah had sung of her as the vineyard of Jehovah, planted with the choicest vine ; “the men of Judah,” he said, were “His pleasant plant—the plant,” in which He delighted. This beautiful description no doubt lingered in their minds ; it told them so much about divine favour and protection ; privilege so great seemed to guarantee and promise the inviolability of the Holy City. Hence the ground of confidence. Right to the very root of this trust our prophet strikes with his earnest word, when he uses the

illustration of the Vine-tree, and shows that even such a tree may be cut down, and devoured by fire. Nothing, he argues, in the nature of the Vine can secure its permanency ; and so nothing in Jerusalem itself, or in the people, as a people, could secure them against merited judgment. The prophet would have his hearers consider that permanency pertained not to the city as a city, nor to the people as a people, but to both as obedient to God, in whose favour is life. If Jehovah were compelled to set His face against city and people, then what could privilege already given and so sadly abused, avail ? It would only intensify guilt, and bring increased condemnation. Did the people in remembering so much of Isaiah's allegory forget also so very much ? Did they forget that even Isaiah spoke of the hedge being removed, and the vineyard being eaten up, seeing that when He looked for judgment, He beheld oppression ; when he looked for righteousness, He beheld a cry ? The recognition that Jehovah was their God alone, which had been withheld by them in prosperity, was to be wrung from them when His face should be turned from them, and they were to be plunged into adversity.

The position of Vine-tree-privilege was not, however, their original state, and the people are now made to think upon this, that so they might walk more humbly with God. Their parentage was heathen ; they had been born of the Amorite and Hittite, whom they now held in contempt—a contempt, which might perhaps have been justified, if a deeper spirituality, and a loftier morality had prevailed among them than among these people, but this was a contempt wholly blameworthy, if it rested as it did on imagined privilege of any kind. It was grace alone that raised them out of and above their low origin ;

in themselves there was nothing at all of merit. Nay, in them there was nothing but unworthiness, as a babe that is cast away at its birth by its unnatural parents, loathed, helpless, and ready to die! During years after such a sad beginning and miserable experience, God protected and nourished the people of His choice, and when the fit time came He betrothed them unto Himself by covenant. Of His own free love, He did it all: the washing, the anointing, the robing, all were of Him. And all these were liberally and generously given in royal, nay divine measure; all that God could do for His bride, that He did: thus the prophet felt. The false step was taken when the bride began to view her garment, and not her Bridegroom's face; the moment that self-confidence in her beauty, as if it were her own, and not gifted by God, seized upon her, she fell. A sense of owned privilege drove out a sense of boundless obligation; a sense of rights destroyed a sense of duty. After this the descent was easy. The renown secured by divine favour was made a boast of, and the outward prosperity of the nation was only used for the multiplication of high places, and the adornment of images; gold, and oil, and wine, given by God, and due unto Him, were given up to the furtherance of idolatry. Idol shrines were erected in every important street, and 'anybody's' religion came in for its devotees, from a people who owed all to Jehovah. A promiscuous eclecticism, amazing and stupendous, now prevailed! And yet the people were not satisfied. For the religious instinct craves ever for more and more until it be truly satisfied; the multiplication of false or imperfect rites only intensifies the demand for the true, and the perfect. To the prophetic view Israel's

sin was of the gravest kind. It was the breach of the marriage covenant; the sin of infidelity in the guiltiest form without any plea of extenuation. Israel seemed to go entirely out of their way in throwing away their love and devotion on any form of idolatry that might crop up; they seemed to have no regard for themselves, no desire for any good that might be the result. No utilitarian argument could be pled; no proof could be adduced of any advantage accruing from the increase of idolatry. Nay, loss had been suffered; the bloody rites in the Valley of Hinnom caused only tears and sufferings; the nations scoffed at them for borrowing their religions. Hence the punishment of infidelity must follow; those taken in such sin were by the law to be stoned with stones (Deut. xxii. 21). In this way would the prophet seek to impress on his people the very serious consequences of their most heinous sin in departing from God,—consequences that he continually impresses upon them as due unto their own wickedness. He would have them realize that in this punishment it is only their own way that comes upon them. God is not to be regarded as in any way interfering—no arbitrary or exceptional act is to be ascribed to Him; their own way, and their own doings brought all this upon them. “The wages of sin are death.” This law of morality is duly appreciated by the prophet, and strongly emphasized.

Another great moral law is also brought into prominence, and that is the law of heredity. It finds expression in the words, “As is the mother so is her daughter.” Brought face to face with Jerusalem’s deep sin, and anxious to account for it in some way, the prophet thinks of Samaria, and Sodom, which are so closely related as

to be called sisters, while we have already seen that the Hittite was called her mother, and this view is again repeated. What the Hittite had done—what Sodom and Samaria had already done—Jerusalem was only too sadly and readily imitating. This idolatrous tendency to depart from God was then in the blood; Jerusalem was her mother's daughter. But she became worse, for heredity, while handing down a tainted nature, by its very own law increases the taint as it continues. Evil is not weakened or spent in transmission but is strengthened, and disseminated through more parts. Jerusalem was worse than the Hittite, nay worse even than Sodom and the cities of the plain, which had already been destroyed by God. Ezekiel recognises that many serious moral offences prevailed in them, but he saw none of them so bad as the sin of Jerusalem in abusing privilege, and violating so gracious a covenant as that which had been made between Jehovah and Israel. The prophet is very hard upon his own people; he neither spares nor pities. Doubtless, he sees more clearly the aggravation round about, all so near to him, but as a servant of Jehovah, so deeply concerned in the maintenance of His honour, he cannot be blamed for using the strongest language in his denunciation of a soul-destroying apostasy. For the fall of Jerusalem had a most disastrous and far-reaching effect. Other nations could readily find in it an excuse for their own sins. They could argue thus, If Jerusalem, the city of prophet and privilege, could thus fall, how much more might Sodom or Samaria, less favoured than she, fall! This then is what the prophet would mean by Jerusalem's fall bringing comfort to these places. Poor comfort indeed, to see another as bad as ourselves, but

a comfort that many of low aspirations, and little moral fibre readily to take to themselves. So that when Jerusalem fell, the prophet sadly felt that she was giving excuse and example to others. She has thus joined the number of failing and sinning places, the very names of which at one time in her glory and confidence she would not mention. Sin has a terribly levelling power; it overthrows all the barriers of distinction between good and evil; like affliction it brings strange bedfellows together. Sodom and Jerusalem! How sad sounds the combination! Is Jerusalem then to be made like Sodom, and like unto Gomorrha? Verily so, because she has become like them in moral character. This moral degeneration is much worse than any physical overthrow; better die any death than live a life without truth, and virtue.

But for all fallen ones there is a gracious promise of restoration after sin has been removed, and true penitence has filled the heart. While punishment would come by law, restoration would come by grace; for the gift of God is eternal life. This is matter of covenant.

CHAPTER V.

ZEDEKIAH'S CONDUCT CONDEMNED (590 B.C.).

IN our last chapter we saw Jerusalem as the city of privilege, yet doomed for her sin; in this we have Zedekiah, Jerusalem's last king, sitting on David's throne, singled out for punishment because of his open rebellion against Jehovah, his true liege Lord. Judah's king is compared to the highest branch of a cedar tree in Lebanon, a position of highest dignity, strength, and power. Verily

this was the position which a true Davidic king should occupy. Zedekiah, however, had not been recognised or sanctioned by God. The true king and the best of the people had been carried away by Nebuchadrezzar in 597 B.C. in the person of Jehoiachin, and those who went with him. This cedar branch was transplanted to a foreign land, and a large measure of prosperity was granted to the exiles. Jehoiachin himself lived a long time, and in the thirty-seventh year of his captivity (560 B.C.) was released, and highly honoured by Evil-Merodach, king of Babylon, on his accession to the throne. This was the first venture of the great eagle here referred to. His second was somewhat different. For it consisted in raising Zedekiah, a branch of the royal house to the throne, and in taking an oath of allegiance from him and those that remained in the land. This oath, however, was soon disregarded. This branch stretched itself out towards Egypt, and sought the aid of the fertilising streams of the Nile. Here was a broken oath—an overt act of rebellion against Babylon. In consequence of this, very different was to be the fate of Zedekiah from what as we have seen was that of Jehoiachin. Now while Zedekiah was not the rightful king of Jerusalem, he was yet the actual king, and subject therefore to all the laws and usages of kings. His revolt against Babylon and alliance with Egypt were therefore condemned both by Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Hophra was now the reigning Pharaoh, and he was most diligently courted by King Zedekiah. An Egyptian alliance had been condemned by Isaiah; it was always obnoxious to the prophets, and yet it was highly favoured always by a strong party in Jerusalem. This, however, was not the popular party, but the court party. Hence in condemning this policy, the

prophets not only declared the mind of God, but gave voice to the people's wish. Ezekiel serves himself heir to the prophetic testimony. But he adds this significant thought, that in breaking the treaty made with Nebuchadrezzar, Zedekiah had really broken a treaty with God. For God is in history carrying out His purpose. The way in which He was providentially doing so at that time was by sanctioning the treaty formed. He gave His approval to the arrangement whereby Zedekiah should be the vassal of Babylon. Had this vassalage been allowed to continue Jerusalem might have been spared destruction, but by revolt Zedekiah hastened the crisis.

The schemes of Zedekiah miscarried ; his planting bore no fruit. But the divine plan evolved itself ; what God was planting on the hills of Israel would take root, and spread until it should become a goodly cedar. In this we have a prophecy of a perfected kingdom, to which all the prophets looked forward with strained, and often weeping eyes ; and the guarantee of its certain and ultimate approach they found in the Word of Jehovah, who has promised—He who speaks, and it is done. We are reminded here of the parable of the mustard seed used by our Lord to set forth the comprehensiveness of the true kingdom, for under it shall dwell every beast, and every kind of bird, says the prophet, while our Lord declares that the birds of the air shall come and lodge in the branches thereof (Matt. xiii. 32). The kingdom that Jehovah plants shall be for all peoples, and nations ; all other kingdoms man-devised, and man-planted shall be brought down, and God alone will be exalted in that day.

The transition from the thought of a divine planting to that of the justification of the ways of God to man is easy

and natural. The prophet is concerned still with a divine doing ; he still sees the Hand of God in history. But when God is thus viewed as the great First Cause Himself directly and immediately working, some questions begin to be asked as affecting the relationship of the divine sovereignty to individual responsibility. This proverbial saying meets the prophet, "Fathers eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." The sin, in other words, of the fathers fully accounted for the suffering of their children. By a short and easy method, by a superficial application of the law of cause and effect to the moral sphere, without any adequate allowance for the play of individuality and the influence of character, present suffering is to be explained *en bloc* by past sin. The fact of the man being born blind is to be accounted for by his parents having sinned. The law of heredity we have seen already recognised by our prophet as largely explaining the fact of moral degeneration ; that it does not fully explain it, he proceeds now to show. Here then the limitations of the law of heredity come in. And a principle of divine ownership is laid down. "All souls are mine"—this is the divine claim ; each individual soul stands in a direct and personal relationship to God ; each person alone and from this point of view unaffected by the position of his father, has an individuality—has character, and moral worth. Hence the individual that sins shall die—not for the sin he may have inherited, not because of any relationship to a father, but for the sin he himself has done. Hence the present inhabitants of Jerusalem are to suffer not because their fathers eat sour grapes, but because they too have been eating sour grapes. There need be no ignoring of the law of heredity ; what is necessary is to place alongside of it a due appreciation of the law of individuality.

For human life and moral action are complex, not simple phenomena. The prophet Ezekiel doubtless was led to a fuller view of truth here by the outward course of events, while his great contemporary reached his sublime teaching as to the value of individuality not alone by this way, but also by a more subjective mode of abstract consideration.

The right-doing of the individual is his salvation. The elements of right-doing are given ; and while these elements are almost entirely moral and spiritual, there is to be observed in the list one at least that is ceremonial. For a priest like Ezekiel so little to emphasize the ceremonial, and so grandly to bring the moral into the very forefront—this marks a high level of thought, and to him highest praise should be given ; here that true insight into the spiritual worth of things characteristic of the true prophet brings him into close line and touch “with the goodly fellowship of the prophets” in every age. Justice, righteousness, purity of worship, life, and conduct, fairness, honesty, kindness,—these are the outstanding marks of a righteous man for Ezekiel, and—for us. The prophet adds this : that his righteous man will be a careful observer of the law which forbids the eating of the blood, which is the life, along with the flesh (Deut. xii. 23).

Three illustrations are given to show that each case is to be considered on its merits, and apart from all question of relationship to parent or community. (1) The righteous man ; (2) the bad son of a good father ; (3) the good son of a bad father. If in any individual case there be distinct indication of penitence then the possibility of pardon appears, however bad his parent or his country may have been ; and so also, if there be iniquity in any one, punishment must follow, however good his parent or

his country may have been. Though influenced by birth and circumstance each individual is a responsible person. In this we mark an immense advance upon the old view that souls belonged to a community, and lived or died according to its character. The divine claim to souls gives every soul a value, and by emancipating individuals inspires hope in every human breast that tends Godward. The election of Israel to be God's servant, while raising the nation to highest privilege was not meant to guarantee blessing apart from character to individuals; and the casting off for a season of that nation because of sin, was not meant in any way to deprive individuals of life and hope. God hath delight in a nation's homage; He hath also, nay much more, delight in the wicked forsaking his wicked way. God deals not with men in the aggregate; He dealeth with individuals. There is joy in heaven, in the presence of God and the angels over one sinner that repenteth (Luke xv. 7, 10).

Another point here clearly brought out is that in determining who is a righteous man, it is his character at the given moment, that is to be taken into consideration, what he is now, and not what he may have been, or done years before. For certainly a man's true prevailing character, the trend of his being, the principle of his life is the real man, and this must ever assert itself. That religious experience alone then is valid, which is a man's present possession, powerfully affecting his conduct. That doctrine of the perseverance of the saints alone is true, which emphasizes the continuity from beginning to end of moral and spiritual life in the soul. Blessedness and life are not secured by having done good, or having been good, but by so being good as to do good, and continue so doing.

The concern of the prophet then is to hold firmly and clearly that however great may be the difficulties and perplexities of the situation, however many may be the doubts, and misunderstandings, God's way is, and must be, equal. And with striking boldness he throws back the foolish charge—God's ways not equal! Ah! much rather men's ways are not equal! This he does with good reason; for then as now, men construe God by their own categories, in their own ways. They come not with pure, unbiassed minds to a consideration of what God is, or of how God acts; yet all theology must wait on revelation, not on observation or logic. The emancipation of theology from the scholastic method will bring it into its true place; this began at the Reformation, it has been making great strides towards its full attainment in the last thirty years, but is not yet complete.

Men's ways then being unequal they are called upon to repent; a moral reformation, a complete spiritual change of heart and mind (as the Greek for repentance indicates) is necessary; in order to a new way, there must be a new heart, and a new spirit,—a new affection, and a new life.

All such teaching is, however, too late as concerning the present royal House of Jerusalem. The voice of the prophets had not been regarded, and doom was already working. The record of Judah's kings at this time is sad enough. The two first mentioned hardly knew what it was to reign at home at all—both Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin having been carried away into captivity almost immediately after their coronation. Great kings—lion-like had indeed reigned in Jerusalem—as Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Hezekiah, and Josiah, but their descendants no sooner began to roar, than they were captured, and removed hence. Jeremiah

wept with Ezekiel over the sad fate of these young princes (Jer. xxii.). Over the third king then reigning as the last of Judah's kings our prophet takes up his lamentation. He was of a good stock, which once promised well, but now that stock had been plucked up, and the branch now reigning, even Zedekiah, had no stay nor sustenance; for him there was no outlook at all. Nearer and yet nearer the storm-clouds were gathering around him, and darkening overhead.

CHAPTER VI.

A RETROSPECT OF THE DIVINE DEALINGS WITH ISRAEL AND A GREAT INDICTMENT (590 B.C.).

THIS chapter contains that portion of our prophet's prophecies, which review the past history of Israel. A twofold purpose is in the prophet's mind, even to show the people their sin, and to call to their remembrance God's faithfulness as made manifest throughout their whole national experience. The occasion for this historical review was afforded by the coming of the elders to enquire of the prophet concerning the future. They must have been at this time fully aware of Zedekiah's rebellion against Nebuchadrezzar, and they must have known that this great king was even then preparing for another invasion of Palestine, and the punishment of his refractory vassal. In these circumstances they came with anxious foreboding to ask about the coming days. The prophet was not altogether pleased to see them coming, for they had not as yet believed his testimony as to the necessity and certainty

of judgment. They seemed to him to be trifling with very solemn matters ; for true enquiry is always followed by worthy action. What little value these men seemed to place upon what the prophet said ! They heard his views ; they realized not that these were the Word of God for them. They heard him as it were singing his song ; they tuned not their life to his keynote. Hence when they came there is a conflict in his breast as to whether or not he should receive them into audience at all. Already he had told them that idolatry had to be abandoned, before any true enquiry could be made of God as to the future. Yet they still come unwilling to give up evil ways, hence they only expose themselves to an earnest, and thorough-going condemnation ; they only come to see themselves in the mirror of the prophet's teaching. History is made to speak to them.

Ezekiel begins with Egypt, and the birth of Israel as a nation there ; and in this he follows the example of the prophets before him, Hosea (ix. 10) and Jeremiah (xxxii. 21). The special significance of this epoch is associated with the revelation of God as Jehovah, a name by which He had not been hitherto known (Exodus vi. 3). The deliverance from Egypt was to be a deliverance from Egyptian idols, for which the prophet uses a word to express peculiar contempt and loathing ; divine deliverance is never a local or merely circumstantial one—it is ever a moral emancipation. And just because this Egyptian deliverance was so local, it was so imperfect. Hence the Psalmist sings : “ Our fathers understood not Thy wonders in Egypt ; they remembered not the multitude of Thy mercies, but provoked Thee at the sea, even the Red Sea. Nevertheless He saved them for His Name's

sake" (Ps. cvi. 7, 8). Then as now the prophetic interpretation of events has concern chiefly for the honour and glory of the Name of Jehovah, and finds in this the most important element in the deliverance of a rebellious people. A two-fold revelation is here before us, even a revelation of character in the new Name, and a revelation of power as belonging to God, as He also made Himself known in bringing a people out that they might be for a witness unto His Name.

After the deliverance came the leading and chastisement-discipline of the Wilderness, when the statutes and laws of the new service were in essence declared. How many, and how manifold these laws were we cannot now know, for they were preserved, and wrought up into what ultimately became the common law of Israel, finding their final form in the priestly code, and particularly in the Law of Holiness as in the Book of Leviticus (Chaps. xvii.-xxvi.). That this was written subsequently to the prophecy of Ezekiel appears clear from the influence of our prophet on this code—the differences between the prophetic ritual (Chaps. xl.-xli.), and it proving Ezekiel to have been first. The one particular piece of legislation, on which our prophet lays emphasis, perhaps rather by way of illustration, however, than by way of enumeration, is the Sabbath law. It is remarkable that the references to this law in Exodus belong to what is recognised as the priestly code, and correspond to the finished form of this code in Leviticus (Exod. xvi. 23 ; xxxi. 13 ; Levit. xxiii. 3). The observance of the Sabbath is perceived by our prophet to be an essential part of the Law of Holiness ; this was to be a sign of their recognition of Jehovah as their God, as in particular the source of their holiness or sanctification. These Sabbaths, however, they

greatly profaned ; the outward and visible sacrament of the Sabbath was disregarded. Yet God clung to this people, and when the fathers failed Him, He took the children. But as at the Red Sea,* as at Rephidim, so afterwards : as with the fathers, so with the children. For the third time we meet with the sad phrase that there was a need-be for the divine fury being poured forth upon this people ; that fury was held back for Jehovah's Name sake. And now we come to a remarkable statement about certain laws not given for their good, not necessary for their life, and which were very easily and soon perverted. The law of the first-born is instanced, and, it will be observed, as a law of the second generation. We know how sadly this law was abused, and how the divine claim to the first-born, in remembrance of the last great wonder in Egypt, had been dishonoured in connection with the Moloch sacrifices in the Valley of Hinnom. Even in the land of Palestine after the Wilderness was behind them, a distinct ignoring of the divine claim on Israel was manifest, and instead of bringing into it a pure system of religion, which would drive out the corrupt system of Hivite and Amorite idolatries, they only too readily accepted many Canaanitish practices, and incorporated these with their own into their ordinary religious observances. Hence a conflict was certain to arise between the easy-going tendencies of such a people, and the true prophets of Jehovah—a conflict which clearly marks the whole history. Evidence is borne to this in the earliest written prophecy of Amos, and we know how courageously Elijah stood in the breach for Jehovah against Baal, the god of the land. Ezekiel clearly shows his approval of what had been done in measure by Hezekiah, and fully by Josiah when the

* Or rather the Reed Sea.

worship at the High Places was put an end to. Whatever may be the exact meaning of Ch. xx. 29,* it is obvious that the High Places are in some way contemptuously referred to. The severe tension required in the maintenance of Jehovah's worship was too much for Israel; and the tendency which at first was largely natural and unconscious was now taking definite shape as a distinct purpose, even this—"to become like the nations." The whole aim of the divine dealing was to make Israel unlike the nations, separate from them unto Jehovah. From Moses to Jeremiah Ezekiel sees that Jehovah has been working on towards this end; but now, at least for a time, God ceases to strive; the voice of prophecy is to cease for a season, and judgment is to do its work. What mercy had hitherto failed to accomplish some signal kingly vindication of God must bring about. The divine aim must prevail. The people must again be taken into the wilderness; they must again be made to feel their need of Jehovah as their shepherd; they must be gathered together again by His rod, and told off for restoration. All that would not submit to this divine shepherding would be cut off; all the proudly exulting ones would be taken away, and a people duly humbled and poor would trust in Jehovah (Zeph. iii.). The immediate outlook is dark and sad enough—attachment to idolatry seems a fixed and settled purpose; the prophet sees punishment, and punishment alone, in the near future—but he looks with immeasurable calm beyond the dark, thick clouds, and he knows that, however much things may seem against him, there will yet be a purified people dwelling in their own land, and worshipping in a new Temple. This ever-springing hope must characterise every prophet in every age; the

* Page 61. See Glossary.

future must be with God and the good, however much the present may seem given over to the powers of evil.

The historical review is now over, and the prophet devotes himself again to delineating the coming judgment. When he speaks about the divine fire already kindled, the unbelief of the people regards him as speaking in parabolic or allegorical language. They treat him as talking about something that is unreal, a mere dream of his own! A dream forsooth! Ah! it was no dream to him, and so he comes forth smiting his sides, and deeply sighing, if by any means he might impress them with his own intense conviction of the reality of his belief. He emphatically declares that sighing and crying will soon not be confined to himself, but will be general among them all. How striking is the dirge of lamentation that follows—as the prophet beholds the sword unsheathed, all-devouring, doubled and tripled in all directions. Thus the prophet was compelled to use strongest language, because of prevailing unbelief. There is no uncertainty or want of definiteness in what Ezekiel sees, and says. Already Nebuchadrezzar, as was the manner of heathen kings, was consulting the priests and augurs as to his next great undertaking. Which way shall he go? Shall Jerusalem be in his route? The lot that falls is against Jerusalem; preparations against the doomed city are therefore set agoing. But the inhabitants of Jerusalem, already perjured, seemed steeled against eventualities; that infatuation, that blinds the eyes of doomed nations, was at work there. Zedekiah is now addressed as a rejected king from whose head the royal diadem is speedily to be torn. His usurpation of royal power must cease; every evil arrangement must come to an

end. Only then shall the kingdom of God be established under the rule of His righteous servant.

Among the adjoining nations, with which at this time Zedekiah was negotiating a great alliance against Babylon, was Ammon. Jeremiah gives a list of these nations (Ch. xxvii.). Rabbath, the capital of Ammon, had been mentioned. At first it would appear that the alternative of invasion lay between Ammon and Jerusalem, but the prophet saw clearly that the wave of invasion would include both; hence his warning now to Ammon, and his earnest advice that this people should no longer indulge in fond imaginations of safety, when danger was so near.

The distinct sins of Jerusalem are then enumerated. An indictment is drawn up as in a formal manner, and four distinct charges are stated. The indictment is followed by a sentence of condemnation. The four charges deal with great breaches of the moral law, moral and spiritual injustice and impurity—only one sub-charge dealing with a ceremonial matter, that of eating with the blood. A great purging is required, hence the figure of a furnace, in which by melting, the alloy is separated from the precious metal: a purging that must include all the classes of the community—king, priests, princes, prophets, people. All had gone astray, none were willing to stand in the breach, and make up the fence for God.

Judah is now compared with Israel under the similitude of two sisters of the same mother. Judah is called Oholibah, and Israel Oholah, two words which have reference to the divine tent or dwelling; that applied to Judah making no doubt special reference to the closer relationship between her and Jehovah, inasmuch as the

Temple was in her midst. Israel had forsaken Jehovah by forming an alliance with the Assyrians; this was the sin of spiritual whoredom, or infidelity. Her way came upon her own head; those to whom she had foolishly given her affection became her destroyers. The fate that had befallen Israel might have been a sufficient warning to Judah. Not only had they now the words of Isaiah to guide them as to the way in which they should walk, they had also a great historical catastrophe to confirm his every word. Yet the warning was in no wise taken. Alliances with Assyria, and even with Chaldæa were favoured (710 B.C.). Manasseh formed also in 680 B.C. an alliance with the latter power, the result being spiritual degeneration. And now in Zedekiah's time, worse than all, was this alliance with Egypt, Judah going back to the evil condition from which God had originally delivered her. Nothing was so distasteful to the prophets as any coming and going with Egypt; that nation was wholly corrupt. Babylon as a slighted lover, whose pretensions had been passed over in favour of those of Egypt, would come in all the anger of such a capacity, and execute a terrible vengeance upon Judah, removing all her beauty and dignity. Judah's sin being worse than that of Samaria, her punishment was to be greater.

Another indictment follows in which three great sins are emphasized;—the sacrifice of Children to Moloch, the profanation of the Temple, and the violation of the Sabbath day. The utter disregard of all that was peculiarly sacred in Jerusalem at this time thus marked the people.

The way in which our prophet dwells upon, and works out in so much detail the sin of Israel as spiritual adultery, is peculiar to himself, though the figure is by no means his

own ; it is the possession of all the prophets, and was largely used by Hosea. The divine covenant was conceived as a marriage contract, pure and all-absorbing. Jehovah was represented as the kindest, most constant, and most gracious of husbands, and in the light of all this Israel's sin appeared most heinous, and aggravated. Ezekiel appeals to the verdict of righteous men. He appeals to history. No plea of extenuation can be pled. There remained nothing but a sharp punishment, which posterity would recognise to be just, and only too much merited. Israel would by this learn that Jehovah was their God, with supreme claims upon their allegiance.

CHAPTER VII.

PROPHECIES ON THE EVE OF JERUSALEM'S FALL AGAINST THE NATIONS (588 B.C.).

THE prophet is no more troubled with deputations from the elders. They now realize what kind of man he is. Only one word more is he to say, and then for more than a year he is to remain silent, not because he has no more to say, but to allow his hearers to learn that what he had said was true, and their unbelief wholly unjustifiable.

The tenth day of the tenth month was a dark day in the Jewish Calendar : it was one of the four great fasts instituted in commemoration of the sad events of the siege and fall of Jerusalem—fasts that were strangely kept up even after the return, and stopped by prophetic authority exercised by Zechariah. This day was a never-to-be-forgotten day for Ezekiel and Jerusalem : on it the prophet's

words began to be realized and the doom of the city. At the very moment that the army of Babylon gathers round Mount Zion, the prophet speaks of the pot being placed on the fire, thereby signifying that his own city with its sin was now to be destroyed with all classes within its borders. Now all sin had come to light, and complete is the vengeance that is being taken. For not only are the contents of the pot to be burnt, the pot itself is to be destroyed, so rusty and useless had it become. Not only the people, but the very city itself had now to be removed. Only thus could a perfect purgation be effected.

A coincidence of a striking character takes place at this very time, and in harmony with the way in which the prophets spiritualize the events of their own lives, this sad event is made to teach its own lessons. The prophet's wife dies—dies before her husband's public vindication had come, but in view of it. Great though this blow must have been to him, a greater blow was at this period being struck. Dear, even as the desire of his eyes, though his wife had been to him, yet dearer was the Holy Place on Mount Moriah. This terrible national affliction left no place for the great domestic loss to be felt. Hence, wholly taken up as God's servant with the public interests of his religion and his people, he mourns not at all for his wife; none of the signs of private and personal mourning appear upon him. Jeremiah had been forbidden to marry, lest in such a crisis a man so emotional as he was might have been tempted to place private and personal interests before those of God. Ezekiel, a man of a different temperament, is forbidden to lament the loss of his wife; as a type of duty he is made to acquiesce so entirely and completely in the divine judgment as not to weep at all in public. Of

course his own grief could not be prevented, but it was to be silent ; no one should know of it. . This great lesson is taught that absorption in the work of God, and devotion to universal interests, may raise a man to a point, where however much he may feel domestic or private loss, he will say nothing about it ; he is supremely concerned and grieved about other things. The people are thus, by example, forbidden to mourn publicly over the loss of their dear ones in the fall of Jerusalem. This had come about by a divine ordering, and public mourning might only be a continuation of that sin of murmuring against God which had brought about this catastrophe. Furthermore, the exiles to whom he spoke were in Babylon. Any public demonstration of grief on their part might only lead to the special anger of their masters. What grief they should feel must be in silence. No one must know of it. But for their sins, and their iniquities which had led to the profanation of the Temple, they should mourn keenly.

And now Ezekiel is ordered to say nothing more in the meantime. His mouth is to be opened only when his complete vindication as a prophet should come. Only when every word of his as to the fall of Jerusalem should be fulfilled, when all unbelief in him and in his mission should have been proved to be wrong and sinful, and when Jehovah would be recognised as having done all things well, only then would he again speak, and that with hope and encouragement to a believing people about the good things, which God was preparing for them.

But while the prophet's mouth is closed as concerning his own people, he has his mission as concerning the nations. Thus during his time of suspended activity among his fellow-exiles, God gives him very definite

messages to deliver to the Children of Ammon, Moab, Edom, the Philistines, Egypt and Tyre—six great messages, but the speciality of Ezekiel's prophecy is the way in which the messages to Egypt and Tyre are elaborated, and fully detailed. Comparing these oracles with those of Jeremiah, we find first of all that Tyre here takes the place of Damascus; secondly, that Ezekiel deals not with the Arabian tribes or with Elam, save only to speak of them casually as already numbered with the shades; and thirdly, that working up Isaiah's material Jeremiah has elaborated the prophecies against Moab, while Ezekiel has done this with regard to Tyre. Isaiah had already voiced the divine will concerning this maritime power.

Ammon and Moab were using this occasion for foolish boasting; their old jealousy was now being gratified. Jerusalem was in her last struggle; the House of Judah seemed no better than other peoples. Ezekiel therefore reminds these peoples that their day of judgment is near, and he has no promise of restoration for them such as he had already given to Jerusalem—such as Jeremiah had held out to them. As for Edom and the Philistines the prophet finds that they had been deliberately taking vengeance on Judah, consulting their own private interests at a time of distress like this, and he is constrained to denounce against them the vengeance of Jehovah, that so they may know that He is the supreme King of nations.

Very special interest, however, was felt to attach at this time to Egypt and to Tyre, both of which powers were to come under the lash of Nebuchadrezzar. Hence of them Ezekiel speaks at great length; he speaks opportunely.

As we have seen, Zedekiah and Pharaoh Hophra were at this time in alliance. Nebuchadrezzar was urged on

to punish Egypt for assisting his refractory vassal; and indeed this was a rival power, which the position of affairs compelled him to invade, and if possible humble. Babylon was now in Assyria's place, and the rival powers contending for the world's supremacy were Babylon and Egypt. Hophra (or Apries) reigned from 591 to 572 B.C., and in less than fifty years a native Egyptian dynasty had to give place to Persian rule. Thus the Saite dynasty (the xxvith dynasty, founded by Psammetichus I. in 666 B.C.) was nearing a crisis in its fortunes at this time. The power that greatly weakened this native dynasty, and prepared the way for the Persian domination under Cambyses was Babylon under Nebuchadrezzar. Egypt had been a great kingdom; already twenty-five dynasties, the first dating as far back as 4400 B.C., had ruled as the monuments tell us. The glory of this kingdom was due to the river Nile, a circumstance which our prophet very clearly perceives, and which was also abundantly recognised by Egypt. But Egypt's sin lay in ignoring God, and in regarding this river as her own in some special and inalienable manner, as if made by her, and for her alone. To curse the Nile and to curse Egypt was one and the same thing; and now this divine curse lay upon Egypt. The great river was gradually to cease as a source of wealth and fertility. The markings at Semneh show how the river has sunk at least twenty-four feet—a fact sufficient to prove the great decrease of life-giving and fertilizing force in the waters, limiting greatly thereby the area of fruitful influence. All confidence in the Nile is condemned first of all by Isaiah, and here by Ezekiel; all confidence on the part of Judah in Egypt is as strongly condemned. Egypt is only a broken reed. The whole length of the land is to suffer loss. From

Migdol on the coast to Syene or Assouan among the cataracts, where the character of the river changes, because of the geological formation through which it there passes—this marks the length of the navigable river. Upon all this the power of Jehovah is to be felt—nay, but beyond, even to the borders of Ethiopia. Forty years' desolation is foretold—a period indicative of the duration of the Babylonian supremacy, the close of which brings us to the date of the rise of Cyrus (586-546 B.C.). The death of Nebuchadrezzar marked the beginning of Babylon's decay; the rise of Cyrus was the signal for its fall. Then Egypt would be set free at least for a time, only however to occupy the position of a second-rate kingdom. Never again would Israel even think of an alliance with such a kingdom. And yet under Amasis (572-528 B.C.) for some forty-four years Egypt had a breathing time of peace and prosperity. All the auxiliary nations that had been allied with Egypt in her day of glory would share in the general overthrow. In two great invasions, 581 B.C. and 570 B.C., Nebuchadrezzar thoroughly humbled Pharaoh; it was as if the Nile streams were dried up. The idols in Memphis, magnificent though their temples were, could do nothing. The chief towns were all devastated—Tanis, Tahpanhes (Pelusium), Memphis, On, Bubastis, Thebes. Thus the mighty conqueror fulfilled Jehovah's behest. Only great ruins remain to-day to tell us of departed glories; only now through Egyptian exploration are these ruins giving up their secrets, with their confirmation of Old Testament history.

When Jerusalem fell in 586 B.C. a first defeat was inflicted on Hophra, and this is compared to the breaking of one of the arms of the Pharaoh—a breaking that was to

be prophetic of a complete overthrow, for there was to be no healing of this arm. Both arms were soon to be broken and all his powers paralyzed. Such an event would cause wonder, for the glory and greatness of Egypt were widely known. Like a great crocodile she held undisputed sway for so long in her own waters. She is also compared to a goodly cedar in Lebanon—a figure well fitted to express the opinion that the people of Judah had held about her. Around her copious streams played ; she had every physical advantage—for a time. No kingdom on earth could be compared to her ; all the other trees envied her. Self-confidence therefore came about, and retribution soon falleth thereupon. “He that exalteth himself shall be abased.” Universal consternation seized upon the peoples when Egypt was found unable to resist the wave of Babylonian invasion ; when Egypt could not stand, who could ? No human might or pomp—not even Pharaoh’s could bar the way when Jehovah throned on His Cherubim was moving on to judgment. Only a dirge of lamentation over a power so great remained to be sung. All the pomp and glory of men pass down to Sheol ; in them there is no element of perpetuity ; they cannot continue themselves. Everlastingness belongs only to the moral and the spiritual sphere—to the good and the true. What is now to befall Egypt had already befallen Assyria, crushed before the Medes in 609 B.C., and also Elam somewhat later as Babylon becomes supreme. Death and conquest are great levellers. Tubal and Meshech, the tribes South and South-east of the Black Sea, lie also low ; and thus Edom too is found. Such peoples and great kingdoms Egypt shall meet in the world of shades ; upon her comes only the fate of all God-forgetting kingdoms ; they shall be no more remembered among the living.

Having thus exhaustively treated of Egypt, the prophet now in a singularly full and complete manner deals with Tyre. Tyre was a city of first-rate importance during all the years of the Assyrian and Babylonian supremacies. As having command of the sea, and the founder of great colonies on both shores of the Mediterranean, she had become a maritime metropolis, possessed of great wealth, and filled with splendour. Tyre, Sidon, and Arados were the three home centres of the Phœnician kingdom—a kingdom that occupied a vast place in the history of these days. No wonder then that we find Ezekiel manifestly impressed with all he knew of her. Tyre was rejoicing in the fall of Jerusalem, little considering that the same wave of conquest that washed away the city of David, would seriously damage her too, and in the end cripple her power. The second great invasion of Egypt in 572 B.C. was the occasion of Tyre also being subjugated by Nebuchadrezzar. Jehovah was against her, and like mighty waves dashing against her island fortress He was to bring up all the terrible warriors led by this king. Over the waves she had indeed triumphed, but over these warriors, her power was to be futile. Ultimately she was to be reduced to the position of a bare defenceless rock, from which her sons had raised her; only a place for humble fishermen to spread their nets upon. To-day, this once mighty fortress is an insignificant village, under the Pasha of Acre. It was the siege of Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. that chiefly laid the city in ruins, for after this she never raised her head. The fall of her great colonies on the coast of Africa, and especially of Carthage before the Roman eagles cut off all the sources of her tributary wealth. Another fortune might have been secured

for Tyre if Carthage had joined the mother-city in a great Phœnician alliance, but Carthaginian independence weakened Tyre, and exposed Carthage herself to ruin (202 B.C.). Jehovah had thus spoken, and in the evolution of history the prophet saw the unrolling of a divine purpose. Ezekiel describes the colonial glory of Tyre, when all along the sea-coasts the princes who owed their promotion to her, would be smitten with grief at her fall. As Isaiah tells us, her merchants became princes, and her traders were among the honourable of the earth. The answer to the perplexed question, Who hath purposed the fall of such a city? the same prophet gives thus:—"Jehovah of Hosts hath purposed it—to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth" (Is. xxiii.). The fate that had already fallen upon Nineveh and Thebes was to fall on Tyre; she was to be utterly forgotten.

The prophet then proceeds to describe the glory of Tyre under the figure of a magnificent vessel, riding upon the waves—a figure surely very appropriate. The various tributary powers owning her supremacy are introduced as each bringing their own special contribution in the building up of this vessel. Lebanon, Bashan, Cyprus, Egypt, Ionia, furnished their material, while her carpenters, and mariners, and soldiers, were drawn from every part of the known world. And as for the trade of this city, it was manifold and immense; she was a universal emporium for the nations. Her courage had carried her to far-distant Tartessus, and Gades beyond the pillars of Hercules, while in the north all the tribes round the Black Sea supplied her with articles of exchange. Among the maritime peoples Rhodes is mentioned, because occupying

an important position, while all the land of Palestine as far south as Edom sent their produce through Tyre. Even the distant tribes of Arabia directed thither their caravans. The great Assyrian Empire had been enriched by her example. Alas! all this glory was to have an end. And the reason is given—a reason that is strictly impartial. For already the fall of Judah had been traced to her over-weening pride, and self-confidence; here the fall of Tyre is traced to the over-weening pride and self-confidence of the Prince of Tyre. His heart had been lifted up, and he fondly imagined himself worthy of divine honours. To this temptation great conquerors have often succumbed. It was so with Nebuchadrezzar. An Egyptain oracle hailed Alexander as the son of Zeus. Roman Emperors were deified. Thus the ruler of Tyre acted under an infatuation common to those who see no hand but their own in abounding prosperity. He regarded all this as the result of his own wisdom, and skill; he failed to give God the glory. All had gone well up to this point. The divine favour overshadowed Tyre in all her undertakings. But now in the crisis of her fate a God-denying spirit is found in her midst; there is no room and place for God, hence His overshadowing favour is withdrawn. Her power is seen to be temporary; her king only a man after all. Zidon of course shares in the fall of Tyre.

We have here inserted a much later prophecy, for it is dated in the twenty-seventh year of Ezekiel's ministry, *i.e.*, 570 B.C., and two years after Nebuchadrezzar had inflicted signal loss upon Egypt and Tyre. It is the historical fulfilment to a very large extent of what the prophet had been saying to these great powers. Now they might know that Jehovah was supreme, and that

he was a prophet indeed. All the powers around that had mocked Jerusalem, or rejoiced in her fall, were thus being humbled, so that when once more Israel would be restored to her own land, they would at least be freed from their old enemies. Then would Jehovah's vindication be complete. But already Ezekiel is surrounded by new conditions; his former words are verified, and he now receives a new message to his own countrymen.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NEW FUTURE : CRISIS PAST AND RESTORATION BEGUN (586 B.C.).

THE book of Ezekiel's prophecy may very well be divided into three great divisions, corresponding to three great periods in his life and ministry. From 592 to 589 B.C. the prophet laboured to impress his people with a sense of their sin, and the near approach of judgment. Chapters i. to xxiv. deal with this, and form thus Division I. From 588 to 586 B.C. the prophet is debarred from speaking to his own people, and devotes himself to a denunciation of judgment against their great enemies. Chapters xxv. to xxxii. are thus filled with oracles against the nations, and form Division II. From 586 to 570 B.C. the prophet again labours among his own people, but when exactly he closed his ministry we do not know. A fragment of date 570 B.C., *i.e.*, in the twenty-seventh year of his captivity, is found among the oracles in Division II.; but the prophecy concerning the new future with its plans for the settlement of the land, and the rebuilding of the Temple, forms one complete piece extending from chapter xxxiii. to chapter

xlvi., and is Division III. Only one date is given, even that in chapter xxxiii. 21, and this of course marks the prophet's starting-point for the renewal of his ministry, when the news of the fall of Jerusalem were brought to him by one of those who had escaped. But there is no other date—no indication of when or where or how Ezekiel closed his prophetic career. The form in which this last prophecy now lies before us would lead us to think that it had been worked up by the prophet himself into a complete piece. It is such a contrast to Part I. containing the early prophecies, every one of which are assigned to different years. This is to be expected. Now the stress and strain are over ; the great crisis is now past ; in calm expectation prophet and people have now to wait for Restoration. Upon the conditions and blessings of that era the prophet dwells in this portion. The chronological note already referred to serves very well as an introduction to this division ; its position at verse 21 is only to be accounted for by some displacement of the text. Good authority exists for the eleventh year rather than the twelfth year, as in the Authorised Version ; and a very short time would have sufficed to bring to the prophet the news of the city's fall. We can well believe that he would not choose to remain silent any longer than necessary. It was their unbelief, and not any unwillingness on his part to speak to his people, that had closed his mouth for so long. He only waited for some authentic information from his own countrymen. His heart was very full ; he was longing to speak about the new future, which for him was so full of brightness, although, like Moses, he was not himself to enter into the new land of promise. His suspended function as a divinely appointed watchman is now

again called into exercise by the arrival of a refugee, for whom all night he was eagerly waiting. When the morning brought the messenger, then Ezekiel's mouth was opened, and he was no more dumb. His new ministry connects itself essentially and radically with his early labours. True continuity is maintained. He felt that he had given timely warning to the people who had been unjustly and foolishly complaining of the divine ways. The sword had come; He had proved the justice of Jehovah, and had shown that the cause of the catastrophe had been idolatry, whereby the old foundations had been destroyed. Now the land was purged, and whenever the people should be purged their return would ensue. One only hindrance seems to lie in the way, but that is speedily brushed aside. The miserable remnant, who had not gone into Egypt with Jeremiah, now too late bethinking themselves of his counsels imagined that the land would be theirs. They were in the position of privilege; they, however, lacked the conditions for its enjoyment. It was enough for the prophet to point out that however many they might be, theirs could not be the land so long as idolatry and ceremonial defilement remained among them. In such circumstances all military resistance is vain. The land must lie completely waste; it must lie fallow that so the thorns may be removed. Only after some time will it be ready for a new people, when they shall have been made ready for it by God's providence. Quite a new interest, indeed, is awakened among the exiles in what the prophet has now to declare. His message is now truly a pleasant song; he is about to sing of good things to come. But while hearing this, the ineradicable unbelief of the people still presents a barrier. When he spoke of sad judgment

they believed him not ; yet neither now will they believe him, when he has a bright picture to hold out before their gaze. They are like the children in the parable of Christ, but then as ever divine Wisdom is justified in all her ways. The unbelief of men prevents not, though it sadly delays, the ultimate fulfilment of the purpose of God ; it does prevent human enjoyment of it. As in the wilderness the whole generation that came out from Egypt perished ; so now during the next forty years all those who had refused to believe Ezekiel perished in Babylon ; a new generation had to grow up, made wiser by their fathers' sins, before the edict of Cyrus should open the way home again.

The first theme that occupies the prophet now that his mouth is reopened, and full permission is given him to speak about Israel's future and resettlement in the old home land, is that of the true king. According to the view of the prophets God was the king of Israel : the form of government was a theocracy. At the very outset it was manifestly a grief to Samuel when the custom of having a king as found in the nations around was proposed for adoption in Israel ; it seemed to him not only a slight upon the kingship of Jehovah, but a wholly unnecessary and luxurious institution, costing more than it was worth. Something of republican economy, and sternness appears in this stand against kingly rule. It is true that it is in what is regarded as the later narrative (1 Sam. viii.) that the prophetic remonstrance is fully expressed ; and this was to be expected. During the early reigns sufficient time had not elapsed, to justify the views of Samuel. They only appeared in writing when the whole tendency of the monarchy seemed to lead men away from loyalty to Jehovah, and to be hurtful to the best interests of the

people. Hence Ezekiel's words. These kings had been shepherds in name only; the people had really been un-shepherded. No dependence for the future could possibly be placed on such kings as Israel and Judah had had. If a true restoration, and a true preservation of the sheep were to be brought about, it must be accomplished by the direct interposition of the chief Shepherd, Israel's true and only king. The delineation of a true Shepherd here given as the character of God, and the type for all kings and governors is deserving of our close attention. It is in the highest sense worthy of God, and furnishes us with a lofty representation of the divine Being as conceived by our prophet. It marks the high stage in the advancing knowledge of God to which the prophetic testimony had now brought the people. The sublime unselfishness of the Shepherd, his supreme and only concern for the sheep, his searching them out, gathering them out of places of danger, and finally causing them to lie down in their own land, as in a safe fold—all this is beautifully brought before us. The words of Psalm xxiii. come up before our mind here as we think of the Shepherd—Jehovah, under whose rule His people will want nothing. The new regime is to be one of righteousness, and the people as well as their great leader are to be unselfish. A forecast of a true condition of social life, when the rich shall not oppress the poor, is given us. God will see to the maintenance of a balance of suitable equality between sheep and sheep. For undoubtedly while any scheme of dead equality may be impossible, there is necessary some regulation of the interests of all classes by a legislation based upon the law of God. What is meant by God judging between sheep and sheep must receive some concrete embodiment.

Individualism must be curbed, and controlled by the highest interests of the community. Ezekiel denounced the principle of every man for himself; others beside ourselves must eat of the pastures, and drink of the streams.

But the kingly institution having now become established, and much of national glory having become associated with the royal House of David in particular, the prophet would preserve the idea, and clothe it with truer and better attributes. Hence he works out the problem of a Messianic king—a king like the ideal David, who would truly shepherd Israel. At this Isaiah worked, and here Ezekiel largely follows his lines. Great hopes of a Davidic dynasty had not yet ceased; a Prince of the House of David was expected to lead home the returning people. The later prophecies on the very eve of the return, and after that event, had not so much to say about the coming king. All this goes to show that while it may be legitimate enough to regard Jesus under one aspect as a king, this is but one aspect of the coming deliverer of Israel. The perfected kingdom of God of course required a perfect king, but this perfect king was and is more than anything involved in mere kingship.

So far as the returning people were concerned, the one great obstacle to their full occupation of the land was Edom. The dark shadow of this hereditary foe ever cast itself over the future. But this people, the prophet assures Israel, need no longer cause any terror; Edom was soon to become a complete desolation, and would be unable to interpose any barrier in the way of the restoration. The boasting of Edom when Jerusalem fell was very great; they thought that they had simply to go in and possess Israel and Judah, but in so thinking they reckoned without God, as is so

often done. Their boasting was the mere multiplication of words—empty words. It would be well if the Church of Christ could always discount thus the vain threats of the world, and all her foes. The eye of the prophet is turned in joyful anticipation to the hills of his beloved land. With the Psalmist he lifts up his eyes to the hills. He sees them once more peopled ; he is assured that soon again the vineyards, and olive-yards will cover their sides. The good things of former days are to be repeated, nay even better things are in store for God's people, and just because Jehovah is acting with a view to the vindication of His own great and glorious Name. The nations having blasphemed God's Name because of what had befallen Israel, must now see in the signal blessings poured out upon them as a people the clearest evidence of His being Jehovah, and concerned in His own glory. But the restoration is not to be a mere return ; it is to be a moral and spiritual reformation. God is not concerned only in the transference of a people ; He is influenced only by moral issues. Hence the restored people are to be a renewed people. They had been exiled because of idolatry ; they can only be restored when idolatry shall have ceased ; only as a sprinkled, cleansed, and penitent people, intent on the worship of Jehovah, could they come back. The prophets make it clear enough that blessing and happiness depend not on any physical environment, but on moral character—not on being in the land, but on being in the favour of God. It was the prayer of Moses, "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (Exod. xxxiii. 15). Dwelling in the land and doing good were to be synonymous expressions (Ps. xxxvii. 3). True moral conditions were to precede physical prosperity ; a righteous people were to enjoy outward felicity in

favourable crops, and freedom from famine. It is important that full justice be done to the prophetic teaching that seeking first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness would be accompanied by all other things being added thereunto. The other things were not added because there had been a failure in the seeking. Thus the mountains of Israel, which had been the scene of so much idolatry, and trouble in the past, were to be first and foremost the scene of a pure worship, and only thereafter of highest prosperity in the new days. As the nations had talked about the deserted and desolated condition of Judah, so they would be constrained to remark on the great change wrought by Jehovah, when He caused the land again to be tilled, and to become like the garden of Eden. Once again Jerusalem shall be filled with people, even as by the flocks that were in the past days sent up for sacrifice. This illustration is very appropriate to one like our prophet, who was also a priest, and who must have remembered the sacred feasts of his city, and particularly the great passover celebrations of Josiah's reign. But where personal observation may not have reached, the traditions of his order would abundantly make up the lack. For the glory of the priesthood must have been associated with the grand and liberal sacrifices of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER IX.

THREE GREAT DOCTRINES ILLUSTRATED : REVIVAL —REUNION—CONQUEST.

EZEKIEL had been speaking about restoration, and the new future, but as he looks around he sees only hopeless-

ness and despair. Where were the people who were to be restored? They all seemed dead, and buried. Where was the hope or desire for a new future? It seemed wholly extinguished, as Israel with a large measure of success was now absorbed in the trade and commerce of Babylon. So that when the natural enough question was put, Can the people ever live again? Can they ever enter upon a new career in their own land?—the prophet could give no certain answer so far as human reasoning or expectation were concerned. Appearances seemed all dead against the bright hope with which his breast had been inspired, and to which we have seen him giving such distinct utterance in the preceding sections of his prophecy. At the end of human understanding, and filled with the perplexity that so frequently arises as we look only at things seen, the prophet gives place and room to faith, and boldly says, “O God! Thou knowest!” The moment he does this he receives a revelation of the divine ability to cope with all adverse circumstances, and to bring about whatever good thing Jehovah had purposed for His people. Dead and bleached though Israel now seemed as a nation, the prophet is made to feel that there is nothing in this by itself to hinder a grand national revivification. The dead may by a divine breath be made to live; the dry and bleached bones, the *dissecta membra* of a nation may be rejoined and re-clothed with the outward signs of energy and life. The prophet has then only to speak to this dead nation in the great name of Jehovah, even as in the same great name Jesus spoke to the man with the withered hand, or the woman bowed with the spirit of infirmity. This above all, however, he is assured of, that the restoration of such a people to their own land

is to be no mere effect of natural causes. His own words may do something ; the ordinary course of events would do something more to prepare the people for home-going. Natural causes might gather them together, consolidate them most firmly into a nation, and make them feel more intensely than ever the grand religious and patriotic ties that united them. But more was needed, even a new life from above. And that life God promises through His prophet to give. So far then as the national quickening was concerned, there was hope. The prophet could go on prophesying with a well-grounded conviction that when the right time came, all his best hopes would be fully realized. Thus the vision of the valley of dry bones taught this first great doctrine, that a whole nation could be so impregnated with a new life as when in providence the doors of Babylon should be opened, and the cry would be heard, "Go ye forth of Babylon! Flee ye from the Chaldæans," a people once dead, apparently utterly indifferent and apathetic would with alacrity rush forth singing, "Jehovah hath redeemed His servant Jacob." This is what God can accomplish among nations ; they can thus be born in a day. From this we can learn what God can do for individuals in our day ; nay, what God can do for our whole race in the restitution of all things.

But as a second grand doctrine alongside of [this first one of national re-awakening, and closely associated with it, is that of the reunion of the twelve Tribes. The nation is henceforward to be one ; no longer are there to be two kingdoms. The disruption that took place on the death of Solomon, rending the Davidic kingdom in twain, was always regarded in the prophetic consciousness as an evil thing. So early as Amos we find the prophetic hope

bound up with the rebuilding of the House of David, and the extension of the kingdom to its former boundaries. The jealousy of Ephraim for Judah had necessarily resulted in the national catastrophe. But now both Ephraim and Judah had passed through severest discipline, and the welding process had begun. When both were sharing the same misfortunes in the land of exile, they were being drawn together into one. This reunion had been declared to be necessary by Zechariah in his illustration of the Staffs, which were broken when the people still insisted on keeping up their rivalry. How different would Israel's history have been, if instead of discarding this reunion, they had allied together against Syria and Assyria. They on the contrary refused the brotherly covenant; Samaria entered into alliance with Syria against Jerusalem. But these days with their sad experiences and trying disappointments are gone; now the rod of Joseph is to unite with the rod of Judah; they are to be gathered from among the nations, whither they had been carried captive, and as one kingdom they are to reign on the mountains of Israel. Jehovah would be recognised as supreme; the rods would be joined in His hand. One people, one king, one God, and one worship—this is the prophetic ideal for the approaching future. A correct reading of the prophets leaves no room, so far as we can see, for any such view as is connected with a theory of the "Ten lost Tribes." Their union with Judah, their regathering and their restoration to Palestine, is a distinct doctrine of prophecy. That representatives of the Ten Tribes came back with Zerubbabel, and afterwards with Ezra and Nehemiah, we believe; and though Scripture has not much to say on this matter, we have in St Luke (ii. 36) an interesting

bit of information concerning the Tribe of Asher, one of the Ten.

The perpetuity of the covenant with the reunited people is part of the prophetic outlook. It is to continue from generation to generation. This is not perhaps the same as our idea of everlastingness. But all that was involved in the prophet's testimony was an unbroken continuity in the divine faithfulness, so long as Israel remained a people for God, and honoured Him, and His Sanctuary in the midst of them. The solution of every problem here is found in a due appreciation of the divine character. Punishment, and restoration—favour withdrawn, or conferred, all are alike intimately related to the foundation thought of a true and worthy vindication of Jehovah's name. Both by punishment, and by pardon God shows Himself to be holy ; He must ever in all His ways be a just God, and a Saviour.

One other matter engages the prophet here as he completes his consideration of the steps leading up to the restoration. A quickened and reunited people are to be ready to go in and occupy the land. But are they to have permission? Is the strong arm of the Babylonian power, by which they had been carried captive to be broken or withdrawn? Or how are they to return as the ransomed of Jehovah with songs and everlasting joy? How are their prison doors to be thrown open, and an highway prepared for them through the desert? Such questions must have been asked, and to such questions we find the prophet's answer in the passages, which declare the speedy fall of Magog. When we bear in mind the fact that Ezekiel was at this time in Babylon, and that all his words and movements would be closely watched, we can easily understand

how we have no distinct reference to the fall of Babylon in so many words, and by name. The later prophecy concerning this coming event which we find appended to the writings of Jeremiah contains in some parts a Cabalistic reference to this city under the name Sheshach—a name perhaps that may have originally appeared in other parts too; for this prophecy, and that of Ezekiel, must have originated about the same time, and in similar circumstances. The prophecy of Ezekiel here has been regarded as an apocalyptic vision of the overthrow of the enemies of Israel as the people of God, and this doubtless it is, corresponding in this respect to the vision of St John in the Apocalypse (Ch. xx.). But the whole includes the past, and a particular importance at this time most certainly belonged to Babylon. Babylon had invaded Jerusalem, and kept her people captive. The day of vindication and deliverance was now near. Gog is a name framed by the prophet, while Magog, including Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, with other auxiliary peoples, may well represent the great and extensive Babylonian empire formed out of so many and so diverse tribes. A great confederacy had been led against Jerusalem, and for the moment had been successful. The overthrow of this great confederacy is calmly declared. And thus it is represented as if Babylon would again invade Palestine, and execute vengeance upon her only to find that now that God was against Babylon that power was utterly unable to effect anything. The complete prostration of this once mighty Empire could not be more strikingly set forth. Israel, once delivered from the grip of this enemy, need never again fear anything from this quarter. Their mighty adversary would be utterly humiliated. But here, as in many other prophecies, the language

used by the prophet goes far beyond what the particular case requires. The imagination of the prophet fills up the scene in a most graphic manner with details of terrible disaster and disgrace, and thus his words become a prophecy of a much wider, even the ultimate overthrow of all who conspire against Jehovah, and His Anointed. All that rise against God's people shall completely perish; the gates of Hades, *i.e.*, the very power of the capital of sin, shall not prevail against Christ's Church. Thus, in the great spiritual fact of divine victory over every adversary, and a complete deliverance of God's people, that so they may dwell safely in their own home, we find a glorious fulfilment of Ezekiel's prophecy. Syria, Assyria, Babylon—these great Magogs under their several leaders fell in full view of Israel; every God-denying Empire and civilization must fall. The true kingdom—the kingdom of the saints of the most high God must be finally triumphant, and in the grand consummation of the perfected kingdom the redeemed shall dwell securely. Verily, the vision seems at times to tarry. Scoffers ask, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they are." We need to be reminded that time is not with God as with us, and we need according to the promise to "look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter iii. 4-13). It is incumbent upon us to protest against any limitation of such prophecies as are before us to any one event, as if they rested on some arbitrary, or temporary arrangement, whereas they are the clear declaration of a divine principle of government, continually finding wider and fuller illustration in history. We must also protest against that curious investigation into names and places

found so often, which goes alongside of a distorted view of prophecy, and an ignoring of its great spiritual outlook.

In Ezekiel we have this message to the exiles. Fear not Babylon, fear not any possible combination of foes, now or at any future time; it is God's good pleasure—His fixed purpose to give you the land. Nothing shall interfere with this. And thus our prophet could dispose of any, and every objection or hindrance to the early realisation of his bright hope of a glorious return to the home-land. Only disaster shall fall upon every power that opposes God's purpose; all His enemies are only preparing for their own final and complete destruction. One truth must live on, surviving the wrecks of time, even this that Jehovah is God, supreme over kings and peoples.

CHAPTER X.

THE LAST VISION OF THE PROPHET. THE NEW TEMPLE AND THE ORDER OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP (572 B.C.).

TWENTY years had now passed away since Ezekiel publicly entered upon his mission as a prophet of Jehovah. He had spoken of coming judgment, which had come; he had dealt with the difficulties and hindrances lying in the way of a return to Jerusalem; he has now to give his final instructions for the rebuilding of the new Temple, and the regulation of religious worship after the restoration. How near, and how clear does firm faith make the bright future; verily it was to the prophet "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." And yet more than thirty years had to run, a whole generation, before there

should be any signs of the opening of the gates of Babylon. But in the distinct fulfilment of one part, and that the saddest, and most awful, the prophet had received highest guarantee for the fulfilment of the other half, and that the brightest and most hopeful possible. He had no manner of doubt that the exile would end, that restoration would come, hence he proceeds to give ample directions as to what should be done when the ransomed of the Lord should once more walk on Mount Zion. There is something—nay, much of pathos in the recollection, that this prophet who now closes his ministry with such full and elaborate instructions for the New Temple, was never permitted to see the accomplishment of them. He cast his bread, however, on the waters, and in the due time its fruit was gathered. Not in this case, any more than in other cases, was the reaper and the sower one; but, we may be sure, both rejoiced together.

X { As a priest Ezekiel would have a very special interest in the Temple, and all that concerned the order and maintenance of religious worship. } And we can well believe that in the company of the leading priests of the Jews in exile he did much to preserve the best traditions of his people, and guide them to wise regulations for the future. The period of the Captivity must have been a time of very special importance in connection with the codification of the Law, and the regulation of ceremony. To this period the Priestly Code, and the Law of Holiness as given in Leviticus (Chaps. xvii.-xxvi.) have been assigned. The personal influence of Ezekiel must have told for much; his burning indictment of idolatry in every shape and form could never be forgotten. But with him there must have been other workers; of the final form in which the laws appeared he is not believed to have been cognisant.

So far, however, as the Temple is concerned we have Ezekiel's own plan preserved. That these chapters contain a distinct and definite forecasting of the New Temple to be built on Mount Moriah, seems clear. They are no mere reminiscence of the departed glories of Solomon's Temple, nor are they meant to be a spiritual delineation of the coming glories of the Messianic Era. They give us, as an architect would, a sketch of a building to be erected. Of essential importance here is the distinct statement that a Temple was to be built; the details are of subordinate account. Never do we hear of an architect's plan being carried out in all its items. Local circumstances, and considerations of expense intervene to alter plans. To say that this plan of Ezekiel was not fully carried out by Zerubbabel, and Joshua, true though it be, is no argument against the view that here we have a plan definitely proposed for the new Temple. Like other parts of divinely given prophetic programmes, much always remains unfilled. A divine programme is always too full for earthly realization. Much more than may it be expected that liberty of modifying details was claimed, even by those who revered Ezekiel, and generally accepted his teaching.

It might have been feared that the returned Exiles would have been too much occupied with their own houses to build the Temple, but the prophet shows that the Temple is absolutely indispensable to the new city; without the Temple the city would be incomplete. Many would no doubt approve, perhaps from mixed motives, the more spiritual conception voiced by the prophet of the Exile, who said in God's name, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool, where or what kind of House is it that ye build unto Me?"—a view which anticipated the

words of Jesus to the woman at the well of Samaria, and the vision of the New Jerusalem seen by St John—"I saw no Temple therein" (Rev. xxi. 22). The prophet Haggai had to reproach many for selfishly building their own houses, and saying, "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's House should be built." When, too, the House was in process of building we know how many despised it, as a day of small things. Doubtless, Ezekiel sympathized with a spiritual conception of things, for who, more than he, realised the supreme necessity of the indwelling of the Shekinah - glory, and saw the vanity of a Temple from which that glory had departed? Yet to his mind, and for the time then present a Temple was an absolute necessity. He therefore sees the measurer busy, a sure evidence that the work was done. After a full description of the several parts of the new building, we come to what was after all the essential requirement, the incoming of Jehovah to dwell in His House. Without this consecration, human dedication is vain. The finest Temple man may build will bring the worshipper no nearer God unless God Himself fill the place with His Presence. Upon this man must wait; man can consecrate nothing; this is the divine function and prerogative. Ezekiel had already seen the Shekinah-glory departing from the old Temple, finding for itself a dwelling place in pure hearts among the Captives. He now sees it returning by the same gate to its proper place above the Mercy-Seat, and between the Cherubim. As he sees this, he falls upon His face, and he hears the divine Voice appropriating the new Temple to His worship, as His place of dwelling in the midst of the Children of Israel. The claim now made is for the complete sanctification of the House—its entire separation from everything that might

contaminate,—no burial-place should be in the precincts of the Temple. The whole area round about the House should be kept open and unoccupied. The prophet Zechariah in an earlier day had a vision of a time when everything in Jerusalem should be "Holiness unto the Lord" (Ch. xiv. 21); and Jeremiah tells of the time when Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord. This time would certainly come, but our prophet found that it would be premature for him to legislate, as if it had come. Unfortunately more emphasis was laid upon the ceremonial aspects of Ezekiel's teaching by his successors in the priesthood, and the religious life of the Jews failed to rise to the higher plane of the grand spiritual conceptions above referred to, and gradually became entangled in the meshes of a cold and rigid Rabbinism. The prophetic voices of the Exile did not receive the attention they deserved; the world had to wait until Christ came for a spiritual emancipation co-extensive with the human race.

The regulation of religious worship in the new Temple next engages the attention of the prophet. The old priesthood had been responsible for serious failure here. Idolatry had been allowed to intrude into the most sacred places and seasons; to this the priests had not only failed to give strenuous opposition, they had even been privy to it as our prophet makes us see clearly in the earlier prophecies. Hence those who had been responsible for this are to suffer disgrace, and only the sons of Zadok are to be allowed the privilege of ministering at the altar. Now the distinction of priests and Levites is definitely confirmed; special honour is conferred on the one, while the others are prohibited from the discharge of high functions. The worship at the High places had been put down by Josiah's orders,

but no punishment was inflicted on the priesthood. All the priests had simply been transferred to the Temple. Ezekiel feels convinced that enough had not been done. Just as Josiah went beyond Hezekiah in his reform, so now Ezekiel goes beyond Josiah. To prevent the possibility of the recurrence of idolatrous practices very special responsibility is to be placed upon a small, and select body of men, even the sons of Zadok, while the larger body of the Levites were to be confined to subordinate duties. The prophet is not satisfied with decreeing that no alien shall at any time take part in religious worship, he goes further; he limits the number of those who are circumcised who may do so. The Levites shall cease to do priestly service; they shall henceforward be Temple servants. This actual degradation of the sons of Levi must have been prior to the legislation of Numbers i.-x., and subsequent to Deut. xviii. 7.

Distinct legislation is furnished in regard to the sacrifices, and in regard to the conduct of the priests. They are to be pure in regard to dress, and marriage; they are to be the judges of the people as to all questions affecting religious worship. Thus a court having spiritual, as distinct from civil jurisdiction, is established. To secure their complete independence and impartiality, they were to hold no private property. Thus personal or private interest would not influence them. No system, however, can raise the priesthood above party influence; the subsequent history of the Jews shows what evils resulted in this connection. Not only may the State go out of its jurisdiction, and interfere in spiritual matters, the Church has often yielded to the temptation of interposing in civil affairs. Having dealt with the Temple, and the ministering priesthood, the prophet proceeds to lay down regulations for the sacrifices and the festival days.

And here he seems to have a free hand, for while certain great institutions are being treated as things in existence, which had been handed down from an earlier time, manifestly details as to sacrifices, and as to modes of observance, are regarded as not yet fixed in any rigid manner. Such liberty as is here taken in legislating, or suggesting legislation for the number and amount of sacrificial offerings, differing as these do from those prescribed in the Law, and quite incapable of any reconciliation with them shows that our prophet must have spoken before the code of Leviticus was promulgated in the form we have it. Reference is undoubtedly made to a use and wont—an understood and customary usage ; but the differences between Ezekiel and the Code can only be explained on the supposition that this usage was not regarded at this time as fixed by law. Such differences, *e.g.*, are these : One bullock, and six lambs are prescribed by Ezekiel for the new moon (xlvi. 6), while in Leviticus the prescription is two bullocks, and seven lambs ; one ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram in Ezekiel is ordered—in the priestly Code three tenths of an ephah for a bullock, and two tenths for a ram. Compare also Ch. xlvi. 14, with Numbers xxviii. 3. The prophet could not have departed from divinely sanctioned prescription. Thus, in the Ezekielian programme, we see the legislation in process of formation, and though the Code did not take all Ezekiel's suggestions any more than Zerubbabel took all his details for the Temple, we can see how very great in thought and expression was his influence on that Code. The style of the Code is quite distinct from that of Ezekiel, but very striking resemblances have been traced by scholars. Lev. xxvi., *e.g.*, contains at least twenty-five expressions corresponding to Ezekiel. What was happening now must have happened earlier in con-

nection with Deuteronomy. Doubtless Isaiah and his contemporaries had important suggestions for the regulation of worship, many of which would be accepted and codified. Their suggestions have not been preserved as Ezekiel's have been. This definite and deliberate contribution of our prophet to the new life of restored Israel has been preserved to shed light upon the process of legislation, which, now that Temple and City had been overthrown, and the continuity of tradition broken, had to be finally committed to writing. With that final Code Ezra returned to Jerusalem. To him and to Israel this law was the "Law of Moses," because it embodied all that was originally given by the great Lawgiver along with all that was contributed by prophetic men raised up by God to perpetuate true religion in the land.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE LAND. REGULATIONS FOR PRINCE AND PEOPLE.

THE mapping out of the land of promise and its distribution to the Tribes had been the great business of Joshua, when its conquest had been largely completed. The captivity, and the altered circumstances of Israel rendered it necessary, in the estimation of our prophet, once again to redistribute it among the twelve Tribes. In making this settlement the principle of an equal division is adopted; a theoretical rather than a geographical allocation is chosen. This, however, never came to pass. To some extent indeed the representatives of the Tribes, who returned would be drawn from old association to settle in their tribal district, but the

most seem to have occupied Jerusalem and the surrounding districts. Restoration as a fact did come to pass, but never in the measure and to the extent that prophecy in its grand hopes indicated. From Ezra we learn that 42,360 returned, the great portion of whom dwelt in the cities of Judah. Doubtless Ezekiel expected a very much larger number to return, hence his arrangement for the land. Few comparatively availed themselves of the edict of Cyrus; they were in many cases contented with Babylon, and others were deterred by the difficulties lying before them, real or imaginary—these would “bear the ills they had, rather than fly to others they knew not of.” Human unbelief and indifference in every age refuse to enter into the larger and fuller life which God holds up before man.

Our prophet starts in his division of the land by making ample provision for the priests of Jehovah. Right in the middle of the land equi-distant from north and south a portion was to be marked off as sacred unto Jehovah. In all our arrangements in life it would be well if we would begin with an offering to our God. Twenty-five thousand cubits square, or rather more than seven miles, were to be measured off at once, and in the middle of this the Sanctuary was to be placed. Even as in the Temple there was to be a most Holy place, so the Temple itself was to be the most holy thing in the holy circumference. The priests having been provided for, the Prince has then his portion assigned to him, so that he may be under no necessity to oppress the people either by way of seizing their lands, or raising taxes for his own support. The crown lands were to border the portion given for the Levites, priests, and the city, on the two sides East and West. They were to be inalienable in the royal family, even a gift to a servant having to

return in the year of jubilee. It is noteworthy that for the royal princes the king himself must provide without any additional grants being asked for from the people.

The prince is to concern himself about true weights and measures ; the standard is here prescribed as the homer, in terms whereof the measure of capacity, and of weight shall be counted. Equity in the community largely depends upon accurate and fair dealing here. Hence it is a matter of public justice.

The prince has regulations laid down for him as to his use of the Temple ; it is to be no more a royal chapel, but a national shrine. Formerly the kings went out and in as they pleased. This is now to cease.

The prince is also charged with seeing that the requirements for public worship are regularly supplied by the people as here prescribed. He is to support religion in this practical manner. But of course the whole constitution implies the voluntary assent of the nation, and of the whole nation. Dissent renders national establishments of religion unjust, and impracticable. Ezekiel lived before the time of non-conformity. Priest, prince and people were all one, and under sacred obligation as a nation to Jehovah. If such a condition of things were ever again to come about, State and Church being one, the State would of course endow the Church. That obligation rendered certain outward institutions necessary, and a complete arrangement for the support thereof. Now religion, just as obligatory as ever upon nations and individuals, works not through these outward institutions but through inward motives, and is dependent not on civil but on spiritual sanctions ; it finds its support in voluntary devotion, and asks not the civil power to enforce the payment of the gifts of love.

Two great feasts in the first month, and in the seventh month only are mentioned by Ezekiel—not that these were the only ones known, but because he samples them. Silence is no proof of non-observance. The sprinkling of the blood upon the post is enjoined, an item differing from the prescription in the final form of the law. We find also several differences between the regulation for the Passover in Lev. xxiii. 5-8 (Num. xxviii. 16-25) and what is given here, another proof of what we have anticipated this section in saying, that up to this time there had been no stereotyped amount of offering.

While certain restrictions have already been put upon the use of the Temple by the Prince, he is allowed the distinctive privilege of retiring by the same gate as that by which he has come in. The people move onwards in an orderly manner from north to south, or south to north. The East gate had a special prominence. By it the Shekinah-glory had been seen to come in. It is reserved for royal use. Hence the Jewish expectation that by this gate the Messiah would suddenly come to His Temple.

The vision that is next vouchsafed unto the prophet of the river proceeding from under the Temple threshold, ever increasing in breadth and depth until it reached the Dead Sea, gives a picture of the spiritual blessing that is to flow from Jerusalem as the centre of a restored and holy people. A similar vision is found in the Revelation of St John, where we read of the river of water of life proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. As Ezekiel looked forward to the future he gladly anticipated the time when a restored people would not only be blessed themselves, but a source of blessing to others. How little in this respect was his hope fulfilled! The

rivers that have flowed from our cities have brought anything but life and healing to our country districts, either physically or morally. Must we postpone the hope of seeing this river of blessing to a time beyond the grave? Should not our towns and churches take earnest steps to see that the streams that flow downwards may be pure in their water courses, and life-giving in their moral influences. God forbid that a day of pure rivers, and healthy moral influence, proceeding from our towns, may be a pious dream.

The land is then divided into portions running each from East to West, and a similar portion is assigned to each Tribe. The old number of twelve is made up by two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, being recognised as distinct Tribes. The northern boundary is given in a line running from the Mediterranean along the entering of Hamath to the border of Syria, the boundary on the north of the kingdom of Israel. On the South, the boundary line ran from the Dead Sea by the waters of Kadesh to where the brook of Egypt, *i.e.*, the Wady-el-Arish joins the Mediterranean. There is an important arrangement that the strangers who have become domiciled in Israel shall have a share of the land—a liberal attitude to strangers which was by no means adopted in the Jewish economy. This is one of those gleams of spiritual light that show Ezekiel's advancement beyond his priestly environment, and that makes us think of the New Testament exhortation, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers" (Heb. xiii. 2).

Six Tribes are to occupy the land in equal portions from the north to the central tract possessed by the Levites, while the six other Tribes have their positions assigned in

the country southwards. Judah would be nearest to the sacred portion on the north side, while Benjamin would be the guardian of this portion on the south side.

It is deserving of attention that Ezekiel would place the new Temple somewhat to the north of the new city,—a detail that he might easily have seen would not have been adopted readily. The sacred associations of Mount Moriah would most certainly prove too powerful, for upon this spot the second Temple was built. The way in which our prophet deals with the Temple site shows his superiority to mere association, and the emphasis that he desired to put on the centrality of the Temple. In the equal portions for each tribe is there not a forecasting of a principle of social equality, whereby the rights of each section of the community may be recognised? While finally there is a place for each Tribe—no idea of any of the Twelve being lost seems to have come into Ezekiel's mind.

This brings us to the closing paragraphs of our prophecy, in which the dimensions of the new city and its new name are given. The prophecy had opened with an earnest declaration of the necessary destruction of Jerusalem, because Jehovah was not there; it closes with a beautiful picture of the continuance of a new Jerusalem, in which Jehovah should so permanently abide, that its very name should be Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is there. Here is the essence of perpetuity for cities and individuals. With this grand thought Ezekiel speaks appropriately his last word to us. It is so essentially his main thought. And this thought of the necessity of a divine indwelling for the continuance of Temple and City contributed by our prophet, is the thought that has been

wrought out in the New Testament in the fuller and wider application of the truth to the life of the individual. "What, know ye not," cries the Apostle, "that your bodies are temples for the Holy Ghost to dwell in?" To be thus dwelt in by God is the guarantee of life everlasting. In Christ "Ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 22).

DIVISION III.

CHAPTER I.

THE RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS OF EZEKIEL.

THE reader of Ezekiel is at once struck with the way in which the prophet conceives God, especially when Jeremiah's conception of God is kept before the mind. Over against the prophet as the Child of man stands the Eternal. The Almighty, absolutely Holy Jehovah is seen in all His Glory. He is conceived as now confined to no one place, but as moving above the Cherubim, and in separation from them, from place to place. Jehovah is thus not a people's God in any narrow, local or exclusive sense, but supreme above all nations. Nor is He associated in inseparable manner with one place such as the Temple on Mount Moriah. He has been driven thence by sin to find a dwelling-place in holy hearts. For an idea of the absolute, and transcendent holiness of God is what impresses our prophet. The metaphysical rather than the spiritual or moral aspects of God bulk largely before his mind. His one concern is that the Name of God as the Holy One, as all righteous should be vindicated. He finds in this ample necessity for the overthrow of the Temple, for in that he sees the overthrow of an alien heathen element, which had gained for the time a complete ascendancy over Old Israel. Justice is regarded as belonging essentially to God — perfect equality in all His ways.

Hence the punishment that had befallen Jerusalem was the fruit of their own doings. Israel had rebelled against Jehovah, so that when Jehovah removed His presence and protection Israel fell into disgrace and shame. Looking at the condition of this rebellious people perhaps more as a priest than as a prophet, he finds on their part serious violation of divine commands and prescriptions; Israel's sin is more that of outward failure both in the moral, and ceremonial sphere, than that of inward failure to understand and know God. In this respect Ezekiel does not give what Jeremiah gives, but his view is necessary, and complementary. Being also a man more given to reflection, than called upon for action, he deals more with deductions from general prophetic principles, than with any new principles, as Jeremiah did. Individuality as the distinction of each man from every other—the father and the son being separate and distinct: so also, the community and each member of it being separate and distinct—this conception of individuality is grasped by our prophet fully and clearly. The law of personal responsibility is declared. But individuality in its spiritual unity and significance—in its worth and depth is not so clearly seen. The more outward reflective method leads to a more superficial consideration both of sin and individuality. Israel's sin is idolatry—a departure from Jehovah after the idols of the nations. To the prophet this is utterly unintelligible, for he can see nothing in these block-gods to attract, while the whole history of God's relations to Israel shows a singular record of divine care and protection. To get idols put away is then the aim of our prophet; to show their futility and folly he labours. Holiness of the people would result when idolatry was destroyed; but of course such a con-

ception of holiness might be very defective. Idolatry might cease, and self-sacrificing love for Jehovah might not take its place. The Law of Holiness might become a national obligation as a law, without Jehovah receiving a nation's love. The covenanted relationship between Israel and Jehovah on which the earlier prophets dwelt has been broken now; new conditions require a new people. Ezekiel contemplates, nay legislates for, a new Israel. But in the new Theocracy religion and the law of holiness are to occupy an essentially higher place than in the old, so as to prevent if possible another collapse. The part played by the king is to be limited, that played by the Sons of Zadok is to be enlarged. The defect of Ezekiel's teaching is seen in his allowing too large a place for outward guarantees, a permission that was taken no doubt far in excess of what he intended by his priestly successors. For we do find in our prophet in many places noble expressions of a high spiritual attitude, but notably in the vision of dry bones. In this allegory God is alone the source of true life. It is quite in harmony with our prophet's general point of view to try and account for Israel's degeneracy, and to find its origin far away back in the heathen elements of their source. Not, be it observed, in any theory of human depravity, but of the known depravity of Hittite and Amorite. A people so corrupt even from their beginning had to die. New spiritual life from above had to be breathed forth that so a new people might arise and enter upon the new life. Had our prophet closely adhered to the significance and inherent energy of this new life, he would have done well. As it is we have received in this teaching much of highest value. Then the formula found so frequently in Ezekiel, "That they may know

that I am Jehovah," is used more in connection with a vindication by way of judgment, rather than by way of revelation of grace and truth. The punishment of sin was to be the means whereby Israel, and the nations would know Jehovah; the restoration was to be synchronous with a recognition of Jehovah. But here again the knowledge of God is not so spiritually conceived as by Jeremiah; it is not so much a matter of individual fellowship with God and joyful experience, as a result of awe-causing judgment. The nations were to know God as the vindicator or Sanctifier in the sense of triumphing over every external power opposed to His righteous kingdom—this rather than as destroying sin or the love of it in the members, and carrying on the work of sanctification in the individual spirit. Our prophet conceives God as revealing Himself to the nations not directly, but indirectly—even through Israel, and His dealings with that people. God Himself would be His people's Shepherd, finding a true David as His representative, when He regathered them to their own land. Their final blessedness would be in a land reparcelled out, with a temple occupying the very centre of the land, and a new city called Jehovah-Shammah, because closely identified with the divine dwelling-place. Little room for the fuller Messianic hope remains here. Ezekiel has to clothe his thoughts in forms of an exclusive kind. Isaiah's Messianic king had never come—hence the kingly ideal had failed to satisfy. A Messianic people, as Jehovah's servant, was what Ezekiel looked forward to. But we have nothing like the Deutero-Isaianic development of this people as the Suffering Servant of Jehovah. And yet a glimpse of this truth is seen in the way Ezekiel suffers himself. To Ezekiel the matter thus presented itself. The old Israel

is punished by national death for its sin; from its ashes a new Israel is to arise, rebuild Jerusalem, and magnify Jehovah's Name among the nations—that Name that hitherto had been blasphemed. The restoration of Israel fills his vision; he has no promise to give to the nations; his only concern is with his own people. The time had not yet come for Ezekiel to emphasize the worth of humanity as such; he does not promise restoration to other conquered peoples, as Jeremiah had already done. The grand missionary outlook of the Second Isaiah is not found here. But there is no doubt that there was a timeousness in Ezekiel's work. Only a regenerated people could carry on a true missionary propaganda; to the securing of such a people our prophet devotes his whole strength. The Israel of the Second Isaiah is a regenerated Israel; only when God's work of grace is done in the people can His work of salvation be made known by them. Thus our prophet, brought face to face with the actual conditions of his time, was confined to a particular service. In connection with the vision of God as riding upon the Cherubim we have a remarkable forecasting of a real Incarnation, for the enthroned one is seen as a man. This need not be unduly pressed, however; for it was common enough in the prophets to represent God as having human feelings. While largely using Hosea's similitude of the marriage relationship, emphasis is laid on the sovereignty of the Divine Choice and the sufficiency of what God had already done, rather than upon His yearning desire for the return of the faithless one. While indeed called upon to return, it is felt that this can only take place when full justice has been done to the righteous indignation of God.

The restoration of Israel to their own land was that which

took place when Zerubbabel came back as a Prince of the House of David. It has no distinct reference to any other return of the Jews to their own land. The idea, of course, at the basis of this promised restoration is that God always watches over His people, and restores them to His fellowship. The limitation of the application of the idea to any nation, or to any particular land robs it of its spiritual significance. It is the prophetic kernel of the future, and implies a divine principle of dealing. So also the complete and signal victory to be won by Jehovah over every enemy is a prophetic application to Israel's actual circumstances of the eternal principle that final triumph must belong to God. Hence the Apostle John adopts the words of Ezekiel about Gog and Magog in a spiritual sense, refusing any limited application to any one time, or nation. While finally the promised return of God to His Temple depends on the vision of His departure from a vitiated Temple, and makes no reference to any Messianic coming such as Malachi afterwards dwelt upon. But here appears the necessity that God should not long dwell away from or above His people, but must find in their midst an abiding habitation. Thus the essence of true happiness for the people of God lies in having God dwelling in their midst. In His favour is life; in that alone is to be found the guarantee of continued, and prosperous living. Hence the destruction of all God-forgetting kingdoms: they cease to be. "The wicked are turned into Sheol,—all the nations that forget God." All this our prophet saw in course of accomplishment.

CHAPTER II.

A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

B. C.

- 649. Birth of Jeremiah and Josiah.
- 639-609. Reign of King Josiah.
- 629. Consecration of Jeremiah.
- 625-624. Birth of Ezekiel. Nabopolassar king in Babylon.
- 621. Publication of Deuteronomy.
- 609. Jehoiakim becomes king.
- 607. Nineveh overthrown.
- 605. Nebuchadrezzar ascends the throne.
- „ Defeat of Pharaoh-Necho at Carchemish.
- 597. Ezekiel carried into captivity with Jehoiachin.
- „ Zedekiah ascends the throne.
- 592. Opening of Ezekiel's prophetic ministry.
- 591. Hophra becomes Pharaoh.
- 587-586. Destruction of Jerusalem.
- 585. Battle of the Halys. The Triple Alliance.
- 581. Egypt invaded by Nebuchadrezzar.
- „ Third Deportation of Jews.
- 572-528. Amasis reigns in Egypt.
- 572. Ezekiel's last prophecy.
- 561. Death of Nebuchadrezzar—also of Jeremiah.
- 561-559. Evil-Merodach king in Babylon.
- 559. Defeat of the Medes.
- 549-539. Rise and triumph of Cyrus.
- 536. Edict of Cyrus for Restoration.
- 516. Zerubbabel's Temple built.
- 479. Ezra with the Law book.
- 445. Nehemiah's mission.

CHAPTER III.

GLOSSARY OF NAMES AND NOTES.

(Arranged as they occur in the text.)

(Pp. 11-18.)

Jehoiachin succeeded his father Jehoiakim in 597 B.C. ; carried at once into captivity by Nebuchadrezzar ; treated well ; afterwards signally honoured on the accession of a new king in Babylon. From the treatment of Jehoiachin we may gather that his people did not receive harsh treatment in captivity.

Ezekiel, whom God helps. We know no more of his early history than that he was a priest of an important line. Carried away with the aristocracy of Jerusalem.

Chabor, a stream flowing into the Euphrates near Babylon, and not at Carchemish as formerly thought (2 Kings xvii. 6).

Thirtieth. Differently interpreted—(1) Age of Ezekiel ; (2) or referring to (a) duration of Babylonian dynasty, (b) or to some important event in Jerusalem.

Jehovah. In Ezekiel in A. V. we have the Lord God, but probably the second name is a scribe's interpretation of the first. The name of Israel's God was Jehovah. "Lord God," 228 times ; simply Lord or Jehovah, 218 times. The full formula would be, "I Jehovah am your God." The tendency to read the vowels of the Hebrew for Lord for those of Jehovah would lead to a gloss or explanation ; thus the Lord, *i.e.*, God. In time both words would remain, hence Lord God.

Israel=whole people of twelve tribes. After the captivity the distinctive names, Ephraim and Judah cease as the peoples are reunited.

Glory=Shekinah-glory, wherein Jehovah revealed His Presence.

Voice of Almighty or Shaddai, omitted in LXX. Shaddai only used in two passages in Ezekiel—here and x. 5 ; only once in Isaiah (xiii. 6) ; but thirty-one times in Job ; once in Joel (i. 15) ; several times in Ruth. Also in portions of the Pentateuch (Gen. xvii., Ex. vi. 3), which are assigned to P.

Tel-Abib. A place or district near Babylon. Tel=Hill ; abib=corn. Here as a colony the captives had been placed.

Valley is near Tel-Abib, to which Ezekiel was in the habit of going ; there he saw many visions (iv. 22, viii. 4, xxxvii. 1).

Guilt. The Hebrew word means not the iniquity, but the demerit of it.

(Pp. 18-32.)

One hundred and ninety; forty. The LXX. gives 190, not 390 as in Hebrew, and this probably is the original. The periods must be taken in round numbers, indicating generally the times of punishment of Ephraim and Judah.

Fuel. In Eastern countries dried manure is used for this purpose.

Idol-blocks. A contemptuous term for the Egyptian images adopted in Jerusalem, used by Ezekiel nearly forty times; once in Jer. i. 2; once in Lev. xxvi. 30; six times in Kings.

Wilderness to Riblah. Riblah (not Diblah) is in the north; so that this expression covers the whole length of the land from the neighbourhood of Hamath (2 Kings xxiii. 33) to the Arabian desert. Riblah, a town still so called, on Orontes, 30 miles from Baalbec.

Recover. A reference to the year of Jubilee, when all things were restored.

Inner Court. The prophet saw the northern gate of the inner court.

Pourtrayed. A graphic note of heathen practices as seen represented on the Babylonian and Egyptian monuments.

Shaphan. If this man was Jeremiah's friend, how sadly had his family fallen away.

Image of Jealousy, i.e., an image of the Phœnician Ashtoreth or Venus, erected in the Temple courts, and provoking God to jealousy.

Tammuz, the Egyptian name for husband of Istar, who corresponds to Venus or Ashtoreth. As in the story of Adonis, the favourite of Venus, cut off prematurely, so in the Egyptian story, Istar and her female devotees mourn over the loss of Tammuz, who has gone to the "land of no return."

Twenty-five. A representative number. There were twenty-four classes of the priesthood—one of each with the high priest make up twenty-five (1 Chron. xxiv.).

Cherubim. Symbolic figures closely associated, but not to be identified with the God of Israel. In Hebrew it means nearness, but it has probably a relation to a Babylonian word Kirubi—winged bull, which stands for the symbolic figures common in Babylonian Temples, or Cherefu, a cognate Egyptian word. They were composite figures in some sense representative of the fourfold fulness of animate life. Greatness is suggested as a root idea.

Cross. A common mark, easily made. Not a Christian symbol because found largely in ancient Egyptian inscriptions.

The Border. Far away from the city in which they trusted (2 Kings xxv. 18).

Pelatiah's death. News of this actual event must have been brought to the prophet, and the coincidence impressed him much.

(Pp. 32-51.)

Land=the holy land or Palestine.

Amorite. Our prophet traces the degeneracy of Israel back to their origin in the Amorites and Hittites. We have the faces of these peoples on Egyptian monuments at Karnack. Amorites are mentioned on the tablets of Tel-el-Amarna. Abraham was confederate with them. Joshua x. 5, 6, refers to them as original inhabitants of Jerusalem, Hebron, &c. The Amorite wall at Lachish has been discovered, and it has been proved that as late as Rehoboam, Amorites prevailed in South Judea.

Hittites had a mighty kingdom with centres in Carchemish, Hamath, and Kadesh; they reduced the Amorites, and were engaged in war with the great Rameses II., as we now learn (about 1400 B.C.). Hence the original inhabitants of Jerusalem would be partly Amorite and Hittite. Jerusalem is said to have been founded by Hittites.

Finest. Great light is thrown upon the high state of manufactures by recent Egyptian exploration. The material out of which this leather was made is not certain.

Chaldæa. Isaiah had condemned intrigue or political alliance with Babylon in 710 B.C. (Ch. xxxix. 1-8). Kaldu is the old name of the country, hence Kasdim in Hebrew from Kesed (Gen. xxii. 22). Sunir and Accad represent South and North Babylonia. An inscription of Nabonidus (554 B.C.) lately discovered, traces the history back 3200 years, *i.e.*, to 3754 B.C.; so that from that early date down to 539 B.C. Babylon had a prominent empire-power, though now and then overshadowed by Assyria.

Samaria=Kingdom of Ten Tribes, already destroyed (722 B.C.) for idolatry, and idolatrous alliances.

Sodom, a chief city of the Plain. A powerful confederacy at one time existed among the Sheikhs or rulers of this neighbourhood, but in Abraham's time they were under the paramount power of Chederlaomer, king of Elam, a power rivalling Babylon in those early days, with its capital in Susa. The sudden overthrow of Sodom, and its confederates was a well-known fact, and a constant warning.

Edom or Idumea. Syria or Aram is read in A.V.—Edom and Aram are very similar in Hebrew. The mention of Edom is very appropriate here, for the children of Edom lost no opportunity to cast contempt on Zion. The geographical references here are to near neighbours—Sodom, Edom, and the Philistines. Edom is now a desolation and a curse (Jer. xlix. 16).

Oath of allegiance to Jehovah (Deut. xxix. 12), now disregarded.

Eagle. The composite figures at doors of Babylonian palaces had the wings of eagles, and they "guarded the footsteps of the king their maker." Hence appropriately here used in reference to King Nebuchadrezzar.

(Pp. 52-64.)

Pharaoh, the title of the king of Egypt (Per-ao, *i.e.* Great House : so the Sultan is entitled the Sublime Porte). Psammetichus II. was now reigning, having succeeded Necho in 596 B.C. Hophra came to the throne in 591 B.C. This xxvi. dynasty had its chief seat in Sais, and owed much to the aid of Greek mercenaries. Naucratis, discovered at Nebirah in 1885 A.D., was a Greek settlement specially favoured by the successor of Hophra—viz., Amasis II. in 570 B.C.

The blood. This reference to the legislation of Israel shows one of the oldest ceremonial observances in the life of the people (Lev. vii. 27 ; Deut. xii. 16 ; Ezek. xxxiii. 25).

Jehoahaz, son of Josiah, reigned only three months ; carried away to Riblah by Necho (2 Kings xxiii. 33), and afterwards into Egypt as Ezekiel here tells us. The comparison of these hopeful young princes so prematurely cut off is well worked out.

Zedekiah succeeded Jehoiachin in 597 B.C., and ended his reign in disgrace, in 586 B.C. He disregarded Jeremiah's warnings.

Height. This reading is preferable. Two others are (1) In thy blood ; (2) In thy likeness. The Hebrew consonants are similar in each case.

Sabbaths. The distinctive importance of the Sabbath institution is here brought out (Lev. xxvi. 2).

Gave statutes. The false and idolatrous customs of Israel, often only corrupted forms of a true custom associated with Jehovah's worship, are here looked on as given, in being permitted by Jehovah. There were perversions of rites under influence of Canaanitish practices or of false prophets (Jer. viii. 8).

Trees. Under shade of large trees Eastern nations have erected their altars.

Offering, in Hebrew Korban, a word peculiar to priestly terminology found only in Leviticus, Numbers, and Ezekiel, about seventy times in the two former, and twice in Ezekiel, here, and in xl. 43.

Verses 29. Then I said unto them, "What is the High Place whereunto ye go?" And the name thereof is called Bamah unto this day. Derivation of bamah, not certain—Ba=go, and mah=what ; hence a contemptuous reference is here perhaps made to these places.

The South. The country south from where the prophet was. The extent of Palestine is expressed by, from the north to Negeb, *i.e.* South Judah.

Ch. xxi. ver. 10. Should we then make mirth? etc. Probably an interjected protest, but very obscure in meaning. Readings vary. Woe to the Prince ! may be best meaning of first words, but the reference of the sceptre of my son and its relation to other sceptres is uncertain : perhaps the meaning is Woe to Jerusalem, and its dynasty—for every

(Pp. 65-82.)

kingdom despiseth them even though the sceptre of Jehovah's son. The sceptre of My son is not Ezekielian (Ps. ii. 7).

Rabbath, capital city of Ammon, a Semitic race which entered Canaan and settled down on the east of the Jordan north of their blood-relations the Moabites. Nebuchadrezzar could swoop down on Ammon, or on Jerusalem. Two routes were open to him.

Arrows of divination. A mode of casting lots. Various modes prevailed in different countries.

Teraphim. Sacred objects associated with ancestral worship.

Oholah = Her tent ; **Oholibah** = My tent in her. Two symbolic names for Samaria, and Judah, the second expressing a closer relationship between God and His people in Jerusalem than between God and Samaria.

Assyrians. The greatness of Assyria about 800-700 is here referred to. Ahaz, contrary to advice of Israel, doted on Assyrian aid. 734 B.C. saw tribute sent by Judah to Nineveh. Hezekiah also in 710 B.C. kindly received ambassadors from Babylon. The monuments show us pictures of these peoples on obelisks and walls.

Pekod, Shoa, and Koa are tribes on the borders of Elam. From ignorance as to their locality, these words have been translated, officers and nobles, and princes. Pekod mentioned Jer. l. 21 in association with Babylon.

Bread of mourning. Peculiar customs attended funerals in the East. A feast followed them (Hosea ix. 4).

Moab—lies between Ammon and Edom. A Semitic tribe.

Teman, a division or dukedom of Edom.

Cherethites—a Philistine tribe supposed to have come from Crete (2 Sam. viii. 18 ; 1 Chron. xviii. 17).

Crocodile, as peculiar to Nile waters, is very appropriate as a description of the Pharaoh.

Nile ; this river made Egypt what it was—a strip of fertile oasis between the Arabian and African deserts ; its subsidence and reduced volume has decreased Egyptian importance. The immense quantity of mud brought down by this river has made the Delta, and driven back the sea a hundred miles.

Migdol, etymologically a tower, hence several fortified places would have this name. Here it is a place on the coast of the Mediterranean, and marks the northern boundary of Egypt, 12 miles from Pelusium ; not the Migdol of Exod. xiv. 2.

Syene, now Assouan, near the first cataract, the Southern limit of Upper Egypt or Thebais. Famous for its quarries of granite, wherewith obelisks and pyramids were built.

Ethiopia = Cush (or Kas) lying south of Upper Egypt, between the

(Pp. 82-91.)

first cataract and Abyssinia. Gave kings to Egypt in the persons of So and Tirhakah (25th dynasty 700-693 B.C.).

Forty years=the period of Babylonian supremacy (600 to 560 B.C.). Years of invasion 581 and 570 B.C.

Pathros=Thebaid or Upper Egypt. **Pe-to-res**=Land of the South.

Phut, or perhaps Punt of the Egyptian inscriptions to which expeditions were sent for spices. Sayce thinks Phut must be Phut-Javan mentioned in the annals of Nebuchadrezzar—a Greek colony, perhaps Kyrene.

Lud (Gen. x. 13) an African tribe—West of Egypt.

Border tribes—some distinct people are mentioned—perhaps Arabians—foreigners to Egypt.

Chub, read Lub or Libya on west of Egypt. See Nahum iii. 9.

Crete sent mercenaries to aid Egypt. LXX. read Cretans for Phut. Sons of Krete in Hebrew like sons of covenant.

Noph=Memphis one of the capital towns of Egypt near where Cairo now is.

Zoan, now San ; also **Tanis**, on Lake Menzaleh. A very ancient city, and in the time of the Hyksos dynasty (1900 B.C.) the capital of Egypt. At the royal court here Joseph lived, and on this city fell the plagues in the time of Moses, 1300 B.C. Hence the reference in Ps. lxxviii. 12, 43. This old city has been recently discovered.

No-Amon, the sacred name of Thebes, the great capital of Upper Egypt. Amen-ra was worshipped there,

Pelusium—an ancient and strongly fortified town on eastmost mouth of Nile : its ruins are near Damietta.

On=Heliopolis near Memphis, seat of ancient Egyptian learning.

Bubastis=Pi-Beseth or Bast, *i.e.*, House of deity called Bast, midway between Tanis and Memphis. Has lately been excavated, and most interesting remains discovered, tracing history back to Hyksos period and to the time of Joseph's Pharaoh.

Tahpanhes, near Pelusium ; Daphnae Pelusii of the Greeks. An important fortification built by Psammetichus I., 665 B.C. The brick pavement described by Jeremiah has been discovered by Flinders Petrie.

Cedar. The reference to Assyria in A. V. not warranted by Hebrew.

Sheol, the world of shades, whither all fallen kingdoms have gone.

Elam, east of Babylonia, with its chief town Susa. Had extensive empire in Abraham's time.

Meshech=Muska on inscriptions, hence Moschians of ancient geographers.

Tubal=Tubla, hence Tibareni. These two tribes were famous for archery, and occupied a region south and south-east of the Black Sea.

(Pp. 92-97.)

They came as far south as Cilicia. In xxvii. 13 they are associated with Javan, *i.e.*, Ionia.

Zidon, on coast of Mediterranean; ally of Tyre.

Sixth month. This probably the date to be inserted. Jerusalem fell in the fourth month, and was destroyed on the tenth of the fifth month.

Pillars (matzebah), associated with idolatrous worship.

Senir, or Shenir, the same as Mount Hermon. The old name means the Shining.

Sherbin. By different reading of same Hebrew consonants.

Chittim, *i.e.*, Cyprus.

Ionia, or Elishah, *i.e.*, coasts of Asia Minor, colonized by Javan. Elishah is a son of Javan, and may mean Greece.

Gebal, *i.e.*, Byblus, between Berytus and Tripoli.

Hethlon, read instead of Helek (thy army). Another reading would be Helek for Cilicia. For Hethlon see xlvii. 15; near Hamath, but site unknown.

Zemarites (Gen. x. 18) read for Gammadim; translated brave warriors by some. Zemarite is placed between Arvadite and Hamathite in Genesis.

Tarshish = Tartessus in Spain. An important trading centre.

Togarmah = Northern portion of Armenia (Gen. x. 3). A city in the east of Cappadocia named on the inscriptions—Til-garmi has been thought to be Togarmah. This is not certain.

Rhodes would be geographically more appropriate here than Dedan in the South. R. and D. easily interchangeable.

Edom here read for Aram, *i.e.*, Syria. Aram included Edom.

Spices:—meaning of word read as in Gen. xliii. 11; Minnith was a town mentioned in Judges xi. 33 as in Ammon.

Comfts. Panag unknown. Donag suggested.

Helbon = Chalbun, north-east of Damascus, famous for its vintage.

Zachar: a name of a town required here = district of Nabathea. Nebaioth (Isa. lx. 7). For "wool of Zachar" two towns named on Assyrian inscriptions, **Zinim** and **Arnaban**, have been read here—as places from which wine came.

Uzal. From Uzal. This was translated in A.V. Uzal (Gen. x. 27) capital of Yemen in South Arabia. Yemen famous for sword blades. The opening words Wedan unusual. Text requires emendation.

Dedan. An Arabian tribe (Gen. x. 7). If Dedan were read in v. 15 for Rhodes it cannot be this Arabian tribe, but some people near the sea.

Kedar, another Arabian tribe (Gen. xxv. 13; Isa. lx. 7).

Havilah, read for Hebrew "Merchants of Sheba," occurs in v. 23. Havilah in Gen. x. 7, along with Sheba and Raamah.

(Pp. 97-136.)

Sheba, south-west of Arabia ; ruins of their capital, Marib, still exist.

Rasamah, adjoining above, on Persian Gulf.

Haran, an important centre of trade. Means "the Road," and was on frontier of Babylon.

Calneh read for Canneh=Calno in Babylonia ; identified with Zerghish or Ktesiphon on Tigris.

Eden in Telassar (Isa. xxxvii. 12), a district in Media. Spelt differently from Garden of Eden (see Ch. xxviii. 13). The passage is obscure. LXX. reads, "These were thy merchants," thus making no mention of Sheba, which is in the south as above.

Assyria, for the whole country, or a town on Euphrates called Sura or Essurieh. Chilmad not identified as a place, though supposed to be near Bagdad. LXX. read Charman, *i.e.*, Caramania.

Daniel, the recognised fact of Daniel's wisdom here shown.

Seir for Edom.

Flock=A crowd in festive procession. Many and glad. This illustration proves that large numbers of sheep were formerly sacrificed in Jerusalem.

Joseph, here named as father of two chief tribes of north kingdom.

My, *i.e.*, the Divine Hand. God alone will unite the kingdoms for His glory and service, as equal, no pre-eminence being given to either in the restored state (Is. xi. 13). God alone supreme.

Gog, an obscure description of the king of a country north of Assyria. Gyges was the name of a Lydian king. Magog is the country. Perhaps Massagetae or Scythians generally.

Rosh, translated Chief in A. V., but a people adjoining Meshech and Tubal. Not identified for certain. Cannot be Russia. A land of Rash referred to on an inscription as near to Elam.

Abarim properly a mountain range, translated passengers in A. V. here, and passages in Jer. xxii. 20. Stands for southern limit of Palestine on east side (Deut. xxxii. 49, Num. xxi. 11). The Dead Sea here referred to in the word sea.

Multitude in Hebrew Hamon, hence Hamon-Gog in A. V. Also Hamonah in v. 16 ; fem. of Hamon.

Bashan. The fertile fields of Bashan are here spoken of (Deut. xxxii. 14, Is. xxxiv. 6).

Zadok, the priest who remained loyal to David's House and Solomon (1 Kings ii. 35). His line replaced that of Abiathar in the Temple service, and is confirmed in power by the prophet, when the Levites are degraded.

Cubits, the standard of recognised measurement here implied.

Homer, the standard of capacity=ten ephahs, and different from an omer, which was $\frac{1}{16}$ of an ephah=a bath. An ephah=9 gallons.

(Pp. 136-143)

Maneh=50 shekels. Talent=60 manehs. Emphasis is laid in this verse on exact weighing.

Hin, a liquid measure= $\frac{1}{2}$ part of a bath, $1\frac{1}{2}$ gallons.

Arabah, not desert, but great valley or depression, including the Jordan Valley, Dead Sea, and reaching as far as Gulf Akaba.

En-Gedi and En-eglaim, towns on the shore of the Dead Sea.

Hethlon, probably mentioned above (p. 234).

Hamath, entering in of; marks northern boundary of Palestine.

Zedad (Num. xxxiv. 8), not identified. The boundary is probably north of Tripoli and south of Arvad. Hence entrance of Hamath would be from the west, and Zedad would be near Riblah. Berotha (2 Sam. viii. 8), Sibram (in Num. xxxiv. 9), Ziphra. Hazar-enan, east limit of north boundary between Damascus and Hauran.

Tamar, not far from Kadesh: distinct from Hazazon Tamar, *i.e.*, Engedi.

Kadesh=Kadesh Barnea, Waters of Strife. An important town on a fertile oasis, now called "Ain Kadis."

Brook of Egypt, not the Nile, but the Wady-el-arish, or boundary stream that divided Egyptian territory from the Negeb of Palestine.

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